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THE PRELUDE
TO
MODERN HISTORY

J. E. SYMES



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0 THE PRELUDE
TO
MODERN HISTORY

BEING A BRIEF SKETCH OF
*THE WORLD'S HISTORY FROM THE THIRD
TO THE NINTH CENTURY*

BY
John E. Symes
J. E. SYMES, M.A.
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, NOTTINGHAM

WITH FIVE MAPS

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WATERLOO PLACE, LONDON
1890

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Lucy Osgood Fund.

PREFACE

THIS book contains the substance of a Course of Lectures delivered last year at University College, Nottingham. It deals chiefly with the three great movements that connect "Ancient" with "Modern" History, viz. :

- (1) The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.
- (2) The Rise and Spread of Christianity.
- (3) The gradual Formation of the new European Nations.

To these might be added (4) The Rise and Spread of Mohammedanism; but I treat this rather as an exciting episode than as a main part of my story.

This period seldom forms part of a school or college curriculum. Yet it is plain that every moderately-educated person should know something of the forces which contributed to build up modern Europe, and of the way in which the civilized world was converted to Christianity. I hope, therefore, that this book may find readers amongst those who have not time or inclination to study larger works on the subject.

The authors to whom I am chiefly indebted are Gibbon, Milman, Hodgkin, Bosworth-Smith, Bradley, and Freeman. Some other obligations are mentioned in the Notes. But I wrote the lectures without any idea of publication, and I fear I may have omitted the names of some, to whom acknowledgment should have been made.

J. E. SYMES.

NOTTINGHAM.

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I.

THE GREATNESS OF ROME.

50 THE history of that Republic, under which Rome established its authority over half Europe and over large provinces in Africa and Asia, falls into four well-defined periods, each consisting of about a hundred and twenty years.

In the *first* period (B.C. 510 to 390) the State consisted of the city and the land immediately round it. Rome was struggling for existence against its warlike neighbours. The national character was being formed by the stern discipline which this struggle for existence necessitated. The old legends testify to the paramount importance which Rome assigned to discipline and patriotism. A warrior puts his son to death for gaining a victory through disobedience to commands. Another springs into the gulf which must receive what is most precious in the city. A third is badly treated by his countrymen; but the revenge which, according to Roman ideas, would have been a virtue if directed against private enemies, is inexcusable if directed against Rome.

The religion of this people is equally worthy of notice. Their gods and goddesses are personifications of social duties. They worship *Fides* (good faith,) and *Terminus* (the guardian of landmarks,) and *Justitia* and *Concordia*. Their religion in its earlier forms offers them no explanation of the universe, nor any hopes of a future life; but it binds them together

through the recognition of mutual duties, and presents to them the State as a Divine Institution to which their loyalty is primarily due.

In the *second* period (B.C. 390 to 270) Rome conquered all Italy, except that northerly region which was then considered part of Gaul. But after two and a half centuries from its foundation, the Republic's authority was still confined to the Italian Peninsula, and did not even extend to the Alps. Nevertheless it was in these earlier periods that the qualities were developed on which the subsequent greatness of Rome depended. New lessons almost as valuable as those of discipline and patriotism had now been learnt, and especially the methods by which Rome dealt with conquered nationalities. Close around the city were Oscans, Etruscans, and Latins. Only a little further off were Umbrians, Gauls, and Greeks settled in Italy. On all these Rome had practised her methods. Their gods were taken over, they were allowed to manage their own local affairs, they were gradually admitted to citizenship. And yet where the Roman conquered he dwelt. Military settlements were first planted in the plain round the city. Then similar colonies were planted in the hill passes beyond. Then they were gradually extended over Italy.

In the *third* period (B.C. 270 to 150) the harvest of the earlier labours, was reaped. It took less time to conquer all the countries round the Mediterranean than it had taken to go through the arduous apprenticeship by which these conquests were rendered possible. Northern Africa, Cis-alpine Gaul, and much of Spain, modern Turkey, and Greece were annexed. In every case the conquest was followed by a wise leniency and respect for local habits. The Romans tolerated all religions except those of the Jews and the Druids. They granted the

rights of Roman citizenship to the inhabitants of distant lands, and left to most localities a considerable amount of self-government.

In the *fourth* period (B.C. 150 to 30) the work of conquest was continued; but the Republic was overthrown and the Empire established. This will therefore be a convenient place to speak of the development of the Roman Constitution.

In the early days of the Republic the supreme authority was in the hands of the Senate, an august body consisting chiefly of those who had held the more important offices. In theory the Senators had little direct power. They were merely the guardians of the national customs, the assertors and interpreters of the wisdom of their ancestors. Their influence rested chiefly on the respect felt for a permanent council of experienced men in a state where most offices were held only for a single year. But as a matter of fact the direction of foreign affairs, of finance, and of religion was almost entirely in their hands. This pre-eminence of the Senate was the most remarkable feature in the Constitution. It indicated an extraordinary capacity for obedience on the part of the citizens. If the Senate wished to pass a law or levy a tax their action could generally be vetoed by a single official; and yet they were the real rulers of Rome, in virtue of their character and experience. In critical times they could even nominate a Dictator, who for six months might exercise almost despotic power.

The Senators and the officials were originally drawn exclusively from the patrician families. But in the first of the periods mentioned above the lower orders (plebeians) secured the right of nominating tribunes and of intermarrying with the patricians. In our second period the various offices were one by one thrown open to plebeians, and the Constitution would

have been democratic if the State had been confined to its old limits. But in the absence of any system of representation it was difficult for any but the inhabitants of Rome and its immediate neighbourhood to take an active part in politics. Few could spare time or money to travel to the capital, and thus the government of the great Republic, so far as it was democratic, was the government of the city mob. In these circumstances a gigantic system of bribery naturally grew up. Successful candidates for office were expected to give splendid entertainments to the Roman populace, and even to distribute large quantities of corn among the poor. This practically established an aristocracy of wealth in the place of the old aristocracy of birth; for a man who could not afford to amuse and feed the Roman mob was not likely to be elected by them.

It speaks volumes for the political aptitude of the Romans that with this flagrant abuse at the root of their Constitution they should have been able to maintain and extend their dominions during the third period of the Republic. They had to rule over half a dozen great nationalities, and to keep back dangerous enemies on all sides. But in what we have called the fourth period, the incapacity of many of those who won office by bribery became conspicuous. In the twenty years from B.C. 110 the Republic seemed several times on the verge of destruction from foreign invaders or internal disputes. The dictatorial system, formerly reserved for rare crises, was again and again resorted to. Formerly the despotic power was only exercised in the field of war; but Marius and Sulla were allowed in turns to lord it over the city. Sulla did his best to restore the old aristocratic republican institutions, but he could not bring back the qualities of the old aristocracy. The incompetence of the senators was soon manifest. They had to

fall back on the dictatorial system, and to entrust such large military powers to Pompey, that he could have made himself a permanent despot if he had not been, like Sulla, a genuine believer in the old aristocratic Constitution.

The next successful general was not restrained by any such superstition. Julius Caesar was no democrat; but he hated and despised the corrupt and incompetent oligarchy. He saw that the government must be centralized, if the vast Roman dominion was to be kept together and ruled with even some moderate degree of justice and efficiency. And he gave it the necessary centralization, by securing his own election to all the chief offices of the Republic. He became dictator for life and consul for fifteen years, and pontifex maximus and praefectus morum.¹ Above all he remained imperator (commander-in-chief). This title had hitherto only been held in the field. Our word "Emperor" is derived from it, and it fitly expresses the essential fact about Caesar and his successors, the fact that Rome had become what it had long been tending towards—a military despotism.

The old aristocratic party renewed the struggle once more. Caesar was murdered. But in the conflict that ensued the men who claimed to represent his ideas were victorious, and after a fresh struggle among the victors one of them, Octavius, secured the same sort of position that Julius Caesar had held. He was elected imperator and pontifex maximus, and he received the functions without the offices of tribune and consul. Then he was able to carry forward the work of centralization, and to put administrative powers into the hands of men who looked to him as their chief, and did just what he commanded.

¹ This office gave great influence in electoral and financial matters.

The forms of the Republic continued to be kept up. The Senate still sat. Consuls and tribunes were still elected each year. But these had all become mere shadows, dignified or undignified ghosts, haunting the seat of government, and reminding men of what once had been. The emperors were so strong that they could tolerate these shadows. In theory all offices were still elective, but practically the emperor nominated whom he chose, and could place the military power of an imperator into the hands of the man whom he wished to succeed him.

More than a century of comparative tranquillity and great material prosperity followed the establishment of the Empire by Octavius (Augustus). Some of his successors were men of abominable private character, but the centralized government maintained order, and protected even distant provinces from the shameful oppression which had been common in the later days of the Republic. It made the Roman world a fit field for the exercise of the Roman instincts for law and organization, and it introduced an age of which Gibbon has said, that if a man were called on to fix a period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. (A.D. 96 to 180.)

But underneath this superficial prosperity there were germs of the disease from which the Empire ultimately perished. The imperial system involved the maintenance of a large standing army, and it was no longer necessary for ordinary citizens to undergo military discipline. Most of them were also excluded from political activity since the practical suppression of the Republican institutions. But war and politics had

been the schools in which the old Romans acquired their characteristic qualities. The closing of the doors to these led to a great diminution of national vigour. In some respects there was an undoubted improvement in Roman character during the peace of the early Empire. The virtues of peace began to show themselves. There was more tenderness and sensitiveness and culture than of old. A lofty philosophy (Stoicism) won many adherents. Literature was cultivated with success. But the qualities of patriotism and discipline and obedience from a sense of duty had almost disappeared. The wealth that had flowed to Rome from the conquered nations had encouraged a luxury which was enervating men's character, and which the best philosophers vainly denounced.

The loss of vigour was specially seen in a general shrinking from parental responsibility. Men and women declined to bring children into the world. The emperors tried by many devices to encourage matrimony. Bachelors were heavily taxed. All sorts of precedencies and privileges were given to married men. Nevertheless the reluctance to marry and to have children was so strong that the Roman Empire has been said to have perished from lack of men. It was in vain that barbarians from beyond the frontiers were invited to reinforce the population. They came in vast numbers; they crowded into the armies; they settled on Roman lands; but they contracted Roman habits in this critical matter. When they crossed the frontier they soon ceased to multiply, either by abstaining from marriage, or by adopting the practice of infanticide. Thus it came to pass that a century of comparative peace and material prosperity seemed only to exhaust the people, and was followed by another century of frightful misery and desolation.

The plague of A.D. 166 may be taken as the beginning of a series of disasters, among which other plagues were conspicuous features. The enervation of the people probably made them an easy prey to disease. At any rate the plagues accelerated the decay in population, and increased the necessity for filling up the ranks of the armies with barbarians. The brutality of the soldiers aggravated the evils of a military despotism, and the absence of any feeling of patriotism made them ready tools for the ambition of their generals.

The load of taxation was also becoming an intolerable burden. The system of relying on standing armies had from the first necessitated heavy taxes. The close of the age of conquest had cut off one great source of revenue—the tribute paid by the conquered. The emperors were constantly multiplying officials whose salaries had to be raised from the people. So long, however, as the empire was prosperous the increase of taxes was easily borne. But with a sinking population, a spread of luxury and idleness, and a governing class becoming more and more numerous and greedy, taxes came to rank with plagues and soldiers, among the greatest of the burdens by which the community was being crushed. When we add that the long rest of the early empire was beginning to be broken by foreign and civil wars, by barbarian attacks from without and within, by rival emperors set up by different sections of the army and struggling for pre-eminence, we begin to realize the terrible condition to which the empire was reduced in the middle of the third century. Then was fulfilled, more completely than at the time when the words were first written, the Apocalyptic vision: "And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And there was given unto them authority over the fourth

part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with famine, and with death."

The military ability of Claudius (268 to 270) and Aurelian (270 to 275) saved the empire from the destruction that had seemed imminent in the previous decade; but it was reserved for Diocletian to reorganize the imperial system in such a way as to give it a fresh vitality. Born of slave parents, this remarkable man rose by his abilities to supreme power, and then displayed capacities of a still higher order. The bounds of the empire had somewhat contracted since the second century. Aurelian in particular had ceded to the Goths the province of Dacia, just north of the Danube.¹ But Diocletian saw that the empire was still too vast and chaotic for any one man to rule over and reduce to order. So he deliberately divided his dominions into four parts. Himself a great statesman, he selected the great general Maximian to rank with him as a second "Augustus." Another great general, Galerius, became the adopted son of Diocletian, and received the title of "Caesar," which was also conferred on Constantius, the adopted son of Maximian. The whole empire was then divided for administrative and military purposes into four sections, each of which had at its head either an "Augustus" or a "Caesar." The most easterly part, including Thrace, Egypt, and Asia,² was reserved for Diocletian's personal supervision. The Illyrian provinces and the defence of the Danube were entrusted to his adopted son. Maximian had Italy and Africa;² while the rule of Gaul, Spain, and Britain, and the defence of the Rhine

¹ Dacia included modern Roumania, Transylvania, and the south-east corner of Hungary.

² By Asia and Africa we of course mean the Roman provinces of those names, *not* the modern continents.

were put into the hands of Constantius. Thus the two Caesars, who were young and active men, were placed in those provinces where there was the greatest danger of invasion, with the prospect of succeeding, on the death of their adopting fathers, to the more wealthy, dignified, and peaceful positions. Yet the empire, though divided, was to retain a certain unity. There was to be a close co-operation between the four rulers. A common policy and purpose was to underlie the otherwise independent governments.

This arrangement could scarcely be permanent. So long as Diocletian lived the respect of his colleagues might enable him to retain such a pre-eminence as would suffice to maintain the desired amount of unity. But it was almost inevitable that sooner or later disputes should arise among the four rulers. Nevertheless, the arrangement secured a breathing space, during which the armies were reduced to a due subordination, and the whole administration strengthened. Diocletian seems deliberately to have adopted the pomp and shrouded himself in the mystery of an oriental despot, so as to widen the gulf between him and his subjects. It is difficult to believe that such a man cared much for ceremonies and magnificence. He probably saw that one of the most pressing needs was to deepen reverence for law and authority, and therefore did his best to strike awe into his subjects. Another important change made in his time was the transfer of the seat of government from Rome. Diocletian ruled from Nicomedia, Maximian from Milan; and thus another link with the disorderly past was broken.

It is difficult at this distance of time to estimate the different parts of Diocletian's policy. The immediate results were most satisfactory. Law and order were once more established. The turbulence of the soldiers was restrained. The Empire obtained

a fresh lease of life. But the emperors soon found themselves face to face with a class of difficulties that Diocletian seems to have under-estimated. Christianity had been steadily spreading throughout the Empire in spite of periodic attempts of the emperors to suppress a movement which many of them felt instinctively to be wholly opposed both to old Roman and to imperial ideas. The time had come when the new religion must either be utterly suppressed by the Government, or must be taken over and modified if the Empire was to hold its own.

HISTORIC SUMMARY OF CHAPTER I.

The Republican period may be divided into four periods, each lasting 120 years.

B.C. 510 to 390.—*The struggle for existence* during which the character of the Romans was largely formed. Discipline, patriotism, and practical aptitude for politics and war. They worship personifications of commercial and social duties; and acquire art of dealing with variety of races. The government was at first wholly in patrician hands, but plebeians had tribunes with right of veto from 494, and intermarriage was allowed from 445. The chief officials were two consuls elected annually; but authority was much in hands of Senate, and they could appoint a Dictator in critical times.

B.C. 390 to 270.—*The conquest of Italy* (except Cis-alpine Gaul) occupied the second period of 120 years. Between 367 and 337 the chief offices of state were thrown open to plebeians, whose assembly had full legislative powers; but the democracy was limited by influence of Senate, absence of representative system, and prevalence of bribery.

B.C. 270 to 150.—*Conquest of most countries round Mediterranean.* The Punic wars (264 to 149) subdued north coast of Africa. Greece was conquered (229 to 146). Cis-alpine Gaul about 190. There were also Asiatic annexations. Conquest of Spain began 211. Wealth, luxury, and bribery grow. All free inhabitants of Italy now Roman citizens.

B.C. 150 to 30.—*The fall of the Republic* was mainly due to need of a more centralized government and to demoralization of politics. Hence supreme power successively entrusted to Marius, Sulla, Pompey, and Caesar. Sulla and Pompey wished to restore oligarchic institutions; Marius and Caesar professed more democratic principles; but things tended towards Imperialism. Caesar triumphed over Pompey and secured powers of all chief offices, but was murdered in 43. Further civil wars resulted in supremacy of Octavius from 31. He took name Augustus, secured chief offices, &c., and ranks as first emperor. The conquests of Spain, Gaul, Numantia, Syria, Egypt, &c., belong to this period.

**The first three centuries of the Empire may be divided
into three periods each lasting 100 years.**

B.C. 30 to A.D. 70.—*Augustus and his successors* Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. Most of these vicious, and several incompetent. Yet the new system mitigates provincial misgovernment and strengthens State. Forms of Republic remain, and Empire not hereditary; but emperor can secure military office of *imperator* for his nominee, and other offices follow. Galba, Otho, and Vitellius however obtain empire through army, and without having been adopted by their predecessors.

A.D. 70 to 170.—*Prosperity and peace* on the whole. Emperors Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius. Of these, only Domitian decidedly bad. Arts of peace flourish. Law reigns. Softer virtues flourish, but old Roman qualities decay. Empire reaches greatest extent under Trajan, but then begins contracting. Population diminishes in spite of introduction of Germans and others from beyond frontier as soldiers and settlers.

A.D. 170 to 270.—*Wars, plagues, and miseries*. The last eighty years of this century occupied with confused struggles in which emperors are set up and slain by soldiers, or fight for rule with rivals. Some of these emperors are men of ability and character, but evils of diminishing population, brutal soldiery, growing taxes, plagues, and general demoralization were too strong for these. Foreign wars with Syrians, Persians, Germans, &c.

II.

THE TRIUMPH OF CHRISTIANITY.

WHEN the Founder of Christianity died upon the cross it looked as if the new religion would die with Him. But within thirty years of the crucifixion Christian churches were to be found in almost all the large towns near the Mediterranean. The names of St. Paul's epistles remind us of how many such societies were founded by the fiery enthusiasm and administrative ability of a single man. It was long, however, before these churches secured any respectful attention from the educated and the cultured. To Suetonius and Tacitus they only served as illustrations of the attraction which the most odious superstition has for the vulgar. If a Nero wanted victims for the cruel amusements which delighted the populace, or on whom to turn the suspicion of his own crimes, there was no body of men whose selection seemed so prudent and so popular as the Christians. They were hated by the populace as Jews and by the Jews as apostates. The philosophers resented the claim of ignorant men to have gained emancipation from the current superstitions, and to have an all-sufficing knowledge, purchased without any long study or mental discipline. The magistrates and rulers were irritated with people who were perpetually provoking disorder and riots by an open rejection of the gods. They would gladly have carried out the old Roman traditions of toleration for alien religions, if

they could have done so without violating the still stronger traditions in favour of law and order. They generally tried to protect the Christians from riotous and hostile mobs; but they felt themselves bound to enforce respect for the established local religions, for which the Christians openly showed their contempt. There was accordingly much persecution, sometimes of a legal and sometimes of an illegal sort; but no deliberate and sustained attempt to suppress the new religion throughout the empire was made during the first three centuries. It was then found too strong to be destroyed.

We will briefly indicate some of the circumstances that had favoured its spread in the previous centuries.

(1) The Roman Empire by breaking down national distinctions had to some extent paved the way for a religion that claimed to be universal. Men had formerly believed that each country had its own gods. The important question was not which gods were true gods, but which were the stronger. But the triumph of Rome had given an unreality to such a question, and the fact that one emperor ruled over all the known civilized world would suggest, or at least fit in with, the idea of one God without rivals or equals.

(2) The wide diffusion of the Greek and Latin languages must have greatly facilitated the preaching of Christianity. All educated people throughout the empire had learnt Greek. Latin was the language used in all official proclamations. In many districts the vernacular had come to be some Greek or Latin dialect. Accordingly, when a Latin version of the gospels had been added to the Greek one, a large proportion of the people in every province could understand the one or the other.

(3) The old heathen religions had become quite incredible to

the educated classes, and did not supply to the common people the sort of satisfaction and consolation they needed. The gods were still believed in by many, but the belief had nearly lost its moral regulative and kindling influence. It would take too long to examine into the causes of this loss. It must suffice to say that men had outgrown the old conceptions, and that Christianity was admirably fitted to attract the better sort among the common people.

(4) The overthrow of liberty had closed the political outlets for intellectual activity. Christianity supplied fresh channels for thought and aspiration. It awakened zeal at a time when the peace and order established by Rome secured for many a certain leisure, and when despotism was crushing out many forms of individuality. The Roman instincts for organization and discipline also found much scope in the work of building up the Christian Church.

We are not concerned here with the truth of Christianity, nor even with the superior morality and earnestness of the average Christians as compared with those of average heathens. Christians will naturally put these among the chief causes of the spread of their religion. They may even think it unnecessary to look for explanations beyond the fitness of Christianity to human nature, and the elevating influences it exerts. But the facts mentioned above will show that there were contributory causes of no slight importance.

It seems somewhat strange that the best of the heathen emperors should have been among the most hostile to Christianity; but it must be remembered that these emperors were naturally deeply interested in the maintenance of order, and therefore of the old religions which acted as some restraint on the vulgar, and which the Christians treated with contempt and

obloquy. Moreover, even the most benevolent despot is likely to object to secret organizations. The more completely he is trying to govern well, the more he may resent a rival authority to which some of his subjects profess a more devoted allegiance than that which they owe to the government. But above all the best emperors were Stoics, and there were many points of fundamental opposition between Stoicism and Christianity. Stoicism was mainly intellectual. It taught that goodness could only be attained through wisdom, and wisdom through study and long discipline. Christianity, on the contrary, was largely emotional. Love took the place in its system which wisdom occupied in that of the Stoics. It taught that men could be converted in a moment, that they could turn from sin by an effort of will, and attain the only wisdom that was worth having as a free gift and through sacramental channels. The Stoics were seekers; while the Christians were heralds proclaiming that they had found, and that the most ignorant and foolish person might find, the knowledge that makes men wise unto salvation. In short, Stoicism was essentially a religion for a few picked souls, for a spiritual aristocracy of students and thinkers. But Christianity was democratic, a religion for all men; and even making it a boast that its converts were chiefly found among the poor and unlearned.

No doubt Christianity at its best may be said to include the best of Stoicism. It claims to have an intellectual justification, to glorify the patient seeking for truth, and to regard the being saved from sin as no light or easy thing. But the emperors had to deal, not with ideal Christians, but with men more or less ignorant and narrow-minded, some of them puffed up by fanaticism or conceit, others embittered by the sufferings they had endured for their religion. Such men seemed to them

fanatics whom it was a matter of public policy to restrain. We will not try to trace the spread of the Church in the various provinces of the Empire. It gained great numbers in the miserable century from A.D. 170, when, as we have seen, the Roman world was desolated with plagues and wars and famine. As Stoicism decayed, Christianity became more and more the one moral force at work in the Empire. It pointed through the confusions of the present to a future of eternal joy, and visibly gave to natures naturally weak a capacity for endurance, of which almost everyone had need. The best men, and still more the best women, were attracted to it with an ever-increasing force. Great intellects devoted themselves to its service. Clement of Alexandria and Origen (A.D. 185 to 254) showed how Christianity could embrace all that was best in the old philosophies. Tertullian's fierce energy and burning logic put him in the first place among the controversialists of the second century; and Cyprian, in the third, displayed almost unrivalled powers of organization and discipline. The charge of ignorance and intellectual inferiority could certainly no longer be directed against the Christian Church; but the heroism of martyrs, and the purity of saints, counted for more than the eloquence of apologists or the skill of organizers; and by the accession of Diocletian (A.D. 286) an overwhelming proportion of the best men, and a still more overwhelming proportion of the best women, were to be found among the baptized.

For the first nineteen years of this great emperor's reign the government made no attack on religion. But in A.D. 303 the most vigorous attempt ever made by a Roman Emperor to extirpate Christianity was begun. According to a decree of that year, all churches were to be demolished, all ecclesiastical

property was to be confiscated, all Christians were to be outlawed, all their sacred books were to be destroyed, all meetings for secret worship were to be punished by death. By a later edict, the salutary restraints which the law set on secret accusations were suspended, heavy penalties were decreed against all who should protect Christians, and all priests and deacons were to be imprisoned.

No satisfactory explanation has ever been given of this sudden change from toleration to persecution. It is possible that despotic power and success had rendered the temper of Diocletian so arbitrary that he could not endure the existence within the Empire of an independent organization; and indeed it may be questioned whether there was really room for the two organizations to co-exist, unless they could be brought into some closer harmony. At any rate Diocletian entered on the task of persecution with the energy and thoroughness which characterized all his policy. But within two years he suddenly resigned his throne (A.D. 305), sickened perhaps with the horrors of the persecution, or recognizing that the task he had set himself was too difficult for all the power of the Empire. Two of his colleagues (Maximian and Galerius, see page 9) had entered heartily into the work of persecution. But the third (Constantius) seems to have done his best to mitigate it, and in the confusion that soon followed on Diocletian's resignation, several of the rival candidates sought for Christian support. At one time there were six emperors, but, after a severe struggle, Constantine the Great, the son of Constantius, triumphed over all the other claimants, and established Christianity as the religion of the Empire. (A.D. 324.)

The emperor is said to have been "converted" to Christianity in A.D. 314. We have no means of judging of the sincerity

of his conversion. He was certainly a man of immense ambition, and tolerably unscrupulous. So it seems reasonable to suppose that he was chiefly animated by secular considerations, and that he adopted the policy which he considered would contribute most to his own power and glory, and to the tranquillity and prosperity of the Empire. The Christians were very numerous in all parts of the Empire, and their strength was far more than proportionate to their numbers. Their zeal and unity contrasted with the general confusion and disorganization of the period following on Diocletian's abdication. The attempt to suppress them had conspicuously failed, and it was natural enough that an able ruler like Constantine should take the Church under his patronage, and try to regulate a body that had proved itself too powerful to be destroyed. The support of the Christians was worth purchasing, and whatever danger they might be to the State would be diminished if the emperor could obtain an influential position within the organization. Such a position Constantine undoubtedly attained. It was he who summoned and presided at the great Council of Nicaea, at which ecclesiastics from all parts of the Empire were invited, and whose decisions were regarded as binding on the whole Christian Church.

On the whole it seems clear that Constantine gained by the adoption of Christianity; but it is less clear whether Christianity suffered from becoming the official religion of the Empire. Freedom of worship, relief from persecution and imperial patronage, brought in many nominal adherents, and removed many difficulties and annoyances; but they probably lowered the average standard of piety and morality within the Church. In ceasing to be persecuted the bishops obtained the means of becoming persecutors, at least when they were

supported by imperial approval; and few of them were sufficiently grounded in the principles of Christ to resist the temptation. But it must be remembered that as the Church grew in influence and wealth she could scarcely fail to attract unworthy adherents, and to obtain means of persecuting heretical and heathen teachers. Such persecutions had taken place long before the days of Constantine, in towns where the Christians were the strongest. The effects of Constantine's policy may easily be exaggerated; but it undoubtedly tended to secularize the Church. It helped to modify Roman law in the direction of Christianity; but it added to the likelihood of religion being made an excuse for political wrong-doing.

The Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) was a conspicuous illustration of the new system. It was attended by representatives¹ from all parts of the Empire, many of whom bore on their bodies marks of the recent persecutions. But their Church had now triumphed over the opposition of Roman arms and Greek philosophy. Its dangers were now internal, and the Council was summoned to try to settle the disputes that were raging among Christians, especially concerning the Nature of Christ.

The earliest doctrinal discussions in the Church were discussions among Jews, as to how far the Jewish law was binding on Christians. When heathens began to come into the Church, fresh questions arose, growing chiefly out of heathen philosophies and cosmogonies. Active, subtle oriental minds wove ingenious theories to account for the existence of the world and the origin of evil. Others built up novel systems from the sacred books of the Jews and Christians. Others again turned their attention

¹ As the Bishops were in those days *elected*, they may be considered as in some sense "representatives" of laity and clergy.

to what we should now call psychic or spiritualistic phenomena. Heresy after heresy rose, spread, and died away. But now the most lasting of all the early heresies was beginning to secure adherents. In Alexandria, slaves and tradesmen were discussing metaphysical problems, such as whether the Son was begotten of the Father before Time began, or was made at a definite date; and whether He was both God and man, or a being intermediate between the two. Those who held the view that was ultimately declared heretical were spoken of as Arians, after their leader Arius, who came from Alexandria, the city of Origen, Hypatia, and many other philosophic teachers, Christian and Pagan, orthodox and heretical. The special object of the Nicene Council was the discussion of the teachings of Arius. The lead in the opposition to them was taken by Athanasius, at this time a deacon, only twenty-five years old, whose sweet expression of face concealed a resoluteness of will and intellect that have rarely been equalled. Arius himself was present to defend his doctrine. He is described as a weird, gaunt giant, whose body twisted about like a snake's when he was under emotional excitement. His eloquence and ingenuity failed to convince the Council. They drew up a Creed¹ which spoke of the Son as "God of God, begotten, not made," and Constantine undertook to enforce this Creed on the whole Church.

HISTORIC SUMMARY OF CHAPTER II.

First Century.—Before St. Paul's death (66 ?) there were Christians in most populous places; but they were generally regarded as an insignificant and perverse Jewish sect, especially before destruction of Jerusalem (70). There was no persistent general attempt to

¹ The clauses in the so-called Nicene Creed after "I believe in the Holy Ghost" were added at a later time.

stamp them out ; but many suffered death as law breakers, or from popular outbreaks. Nero's persecution (64) seems to have been prompted to divert suspicion of incendiarism. Many Christians courted martyrdom when officials were disposed to be lenient.

Second Century.—Pliny's letter and Trajan's rescript (110) indicate general attitude of wiser governors. Apologists like Justin Martyr (c. 150) defend Christianity against Jews, Heathen, and Heretics, such as followers of Montanus and Marcion. Persecution increased under virtuous Stoic, M. Aurelius (161 to 180), but Church kept growing. The best women were specially attracted. In Africa, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and in the beginning of third century Origen and Cyprian.

Third Century.—Intermittent persecution, though from 180 comparative toleration only occasionally interrupted. Continued spread of Christianity.

Diocletian (286 to 305) restored peace and order in the Empire, reorganized government, and divided rule with colleagues.

Rome ceases to be residence of the Emperors, and they adopt style of Oriental despots. For nineteen years Diocletian tolerated Christians, but then (303) made a great attempt to exterminate them. Diocletian and Maximian resigned in 305. Confusion followed, and the persecution was modified in many places.

Constantine (306 to 337) secured whole Empire by 323. He is said to have been "converted" in 314. Christianity was established as religion of Empire in 324.

Foundation of Constantinople 324.

Council of Nicaea 325, attended by over 300 Bishops, decides against views of Arius.

III.

THE COMING OF THE GOTHs.

IN our first chapter we mentioned the "barbarians" who lived beyond the borders of the Roman Empire, or enlisted in the Roman armies, or were allowed to settle on Roman lands. But from the period we have now reached, at the beginning of the fourth century, these barbarians became more and more the prominent persons in European history. They were the destroyers of the old Empire, and the founders of the new states from which modern Europe has developed. The very names of England, France, Burgundy, Scotland, &c., are derived from barbarian tribes which bore cognate names in the times we are speaking of.

Most Europeans are believed to be descended from a people to whom we give the name of Aryans. One group of Aryans is believed to have split into the two races who built up respectively the wonderful civilizations of Greece and Rome. The latter of these then conquered the former, as well as the other nations round the Mediterranean; and of all the conquered people it was the Greeks who contributed the most important elements to the Empire of the conquerors.

We must now, however, turn aside to quite a different group of Aryans. The Teutons, as this group are called, had settled over most of central Europe, and had divided up into a number of minor groups bearing different names. The Goths

were one of these groups. They are said to have settled for a time in the region which we now call Sweden, and to have started thence in three ships, the two foremost of which bore the ancestors of the Ostrogoths and the Visigoths; while the third ship which lingered behind bore the ancestors of the Gepidae. They are then said to have settled for a while in what we call East Prussia (c. 100), but to have soon resumed their migrations in a south-easterly direction (c. 200). These legends may be true or false; but at any rate we know that by the middle of the third century, three groups of Gothic tribes were living in the south of what we now call Russia. The easterly group were known as Ostrogoths, the westerly group as Visigoths, and the group who still lagged behind further north were called Gepidae. They subdued the Slavonic and Tartar races whom they found in the country where they had now settled, and they retained their old Teutonic language, customs, and characteristics. They were a tall, muscular, blue-eyed, yellow-haired race, beard-wearing people, resembling in most respects our own Angle and Saxon forefathers, except that they had lost what skill in seamanship they had possessed before they left the Baltic shores. They supported themselves chiefly by war, and by the flocks of cattle which they drove with them in their migrations, but they had already begun to learn the arts of agriculture when they came into contact with the Roman Empire. They were a brave, simple, and cruel race, destitute of many of the virtues and many of the vices of the more civilized people with whom they were about to contend. The Romans thought them faithless to treaties, and it is likely enough that they attached too little weight to such obligations. But the absence of national unity, and the comparative independence of the different tribes, may go

far to account for the appearance of faithlessness, as one chieftain would not consider himself bound by the promises of others. In sexual morality they were probably superior to the Romans, or at least their vices were of a more healthy and natural sort.

It was towards the middle of the miserable century from A.D. 170 (see page 8) that the Goths began to make their incursions into the Roman Empire, which was already suffering from civil wars and pestilences and heavy taxes and oppression. The regions now known as South Hungary, Transylvania, and Roumania were ravaged. The emperors often tried to buy off the invaders by promises of money; but owing to the financial and political disorder, the subsidies were often not forthcoming; and soon the Ostrogoths began to extend their ravages across the Danube into what was then called Moesia, the modern Bulgaria. The most important of these incursions was in the year 250. The Emperor Decius came in person to repel it; but he was defeated in a terrific battle in which 30,000 Goths are said to have been killed. Philippopolis yielded to the victors, who massacred the population of 100,000 persons, and carried off vast treasures. Decius made a desperate effort to cut them off on their homeward march; but they drew him into a swamp by a feigned flight, and killed him and many of his followers. His successor consented to an ignominious peace, which involved the payment of a heavy tribute. We next hear of the Ostrogoths in Asia. They seemed to have crossed the Black Sea in boats, and to have made a series of plundering invasions. In one of these (A.D. 262) they sacked Ephesus, and destroyed the Temple of Diana, which ranked as one of the seven wonders of the world. Five years later another horde was in Greece ravaging

Byzantium and Athens. Claudius II. rolled back the tide in the years 268 and 269; but the conflict was soon renewed. At length, in 270, the part of the Empire known as Dacia, just north of the Danube, was ceded to the Goths, and many of them settled there, and gradually adopted the Latin language spoken by their new subjects. From this has sprung the modern Roumanian.

Other Goths settled *within* the Empire south of the Danube, and were converted to Christianity of the Arian sort chiefly by the labours of good Bishop Ulphilas (311 to 381), who translated the New Testament and much of the Old in Gothic. But he would not translate the story of the Jewish wars; for he thought that his countrymen were already warlike enough, and that the story of the conquest of Canaan would not be very edifying to them. The language that Ulphilas wrote in is known as Moeso-Gothic, because it was used by those Goths who had settled in Moesia. It is the oldest Germanic dialect of which we have any writings. Its alphabet bears a general resemblance to our own both in the order and the form of the letters. It is still more akin to the Greek, though it has equivalents for our Q, J, Y, and W. The words also resemble English. The Moeso-Gothic belongs in fact to the *Low* German group of languages which were chiefly spoken near the mouths of the Rhine, Elbe, and Oder, and not to the *High* German group, of which some form was adopted by most of the other Germanic tribes, who settled far from the Baltic and the German Ocean.

For nearly a century from the cession of Dacia the Empire was little troubled by the Goths. What fighting the latter did was with other barbarians. The Ostrogoth Hermanric is said to have extended his dominion over most of what we should

call central Russia, and this must have provided sufficient scope for his energies. At any rate the Empire was not further molested, and the chief interest of this century (A.D. 270 to 365) is theological and ecclesiastical. In the pause between the great Gothic invasions come the persecution of Diocletian, the establishment of Christianity and the Council of Nicaea, of which we have already spoken, as well as the movements which we must now refer to.

Constantine died in 337. In his latter years he had inclined more and more to the Arian doctrines, or at least to that modified form of them known as Semi-Arianism, which his favourite Bishop Eusebius held. The Empire was for a time divided among Constantine's sons; but it ultimately was reunited under Constantius II., who, like his father, must rank as a semi-Arian. This party had been strengthened by the rise of a rival heresy. The Sabellians taught that the three so-called Persons in the Trinity were in reality only names given to different manifestations of the same Person, as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. The Athanasians found it hard to define their position in language which should not savour of one of the rival heresies; and those to whom Sabellianism was repugnant often found in Semi-Arianism what seemed a more logical way of asserting the distinction between the Divine Persons. It seemed for a time as if the imperial party would carry all before them. Athanasius himself was three times driven into exile. His views were condemned by many councils; but none of these could claim the universal character of that Nicene Assembly which had decided in his favour; and the death of Constantius was followed by a series of episodes which left time for a re-consideration of the questions in dispute.

The first of these episodes was the reign of a heathen emperor [Julian, A.D. 361 to 363], who seems to have genuinely believed in the old gods, or at any rate to have made the restoration of the old religion the foremost object of his policy. On his death Christianity was restored, but the Empire was soon afterwards divided up; and the division was quickly followed by the appearance on the scene of a new and formidable horde of barbarians, and by a revival of the Gothic wars.

We will reserve till a later chapter what must be said of the origin of the new-comers. For the present the Huns are chiefly interesting to us from the effect they produced on the Goths; so we will take our first look at them from the description given by the Gothic historian Jordanes:

“They derived an unfair advantage from the intense hideousness of their faces. Nations whom they would never have beaten in fair fight fled horrified.”

The same authority tells us that they were children of unclean spirits and sorcerer women. He admits, however, that they were skilful riders, broad-shouldered, and skilled in the use of bow and arrows. Hordes of these Tartar barbarians burst on the astonished Ostrogoths in about the year 375, and were met with little resistance. Whether long years of comparative peace had destroyed the martial qualities of the Dacian Goths, or whether superstitious fears deprived them of courage to face these hideous visitants, we cannot determine. Many of the Ostrogoths submitted, and became for eighty years subjects of the Tartar hosts. Others, to the number of about a million, fled to the Danube, the border of the Empire, and craved permission to cross the river, and become the subjects of their old enemies. If such permission

had been frankly accorded on reasonable terms, these fugitive Goths might have become a great bulwark to the Eastern Empire. But Valens, who was then Emperor of the East, was a mean-spirited, suspicious tyrant, incapable of carrying out a statesmanlike policy. He consented indeed to the prayer of the fugitives, but it was upon terms so cruel and humiliating that only their abject terror induced them to accept the hateful conditions. Their weapons were to be handed over; their sons were to be given over as hostages before they might settle within the Empire. Then began difficulties which the government ought to have foreseen and provided for. A million fugitives crossed the Danube, and nothing had been done to provide them with food, or the other necessities of existence. They were willing to work, and in time they would be well able to support themselves. But they could not all at once produce what they needed. Many of them were reduced by hunger to selling their own children as slaves. All suffered terrible privations. Finally the officials and soldiers of the Empire brutally ill-treated the fugitives, and perpetrated unspeakable outrages on the women and children; while they in many cases neglected to carry out the disarmament that had been agreed on.

We cannot wonder that fierce wrath smouldered in the breasts of the humiliated and oppressed Goths; or that a spark sufficed to produce an explosion. The whole region from the Balkans to the *Ægean* was soon in flames. The *Moeso-Goths* joined the new-comers. Other Goths flocked across the Danube; and the wrongs inflicted on the fugitives were soon bitterly avenged by every kind of outrage. The best troops and generals of the Empire had to be hurried into this region; but after some indecisive fighting the Emperor Valens,

and two-thirds of his troops, were killed on the field of Hadrianople (378).

+ It may fairly be said that the Roman Empire never recovered from this terrible defeat; but its immediate results seemed ridiculously small; for the Goths were backward in many of the arts of war, and were quite incompetent to take any strong place which was bravely defended by even a small garrison. They could only ravage the open country, and destroy badly-fortified towns. This they continued to do for nearly three years; but the Empire of the East had meanwhile passed into the hands of one of the greatest rulers in history—Theodosius the Great—who managed to infuse new life into his troops, and to persuade many of the Goths to enlist in his army. The rest were worsted in several engagements, and glad to accept the easy terms which Theodosius offered.

+ A similar policy was at the same time pursued by Gratian, the Emperor of the West. The barbarian element was constantly becoming stronger in the Imperial armies, and their services long delayed the impending catastrophe.

It may here be noticed that the Empire at this time consisted of three parts. Gratian ruled only over Gaul, Spain, and Britain. The intermediate region, including Italy and Africa, was nominally under the child Valentinian II, and really under his mother Justina. Gratian's successor conquered this middle empire; and the Empress Regent fled for shelter to the Court of Theodosius, who took up her cause, married her daughter, and replaced her son on the Italian throne. Valentinian was soon killed by one of his barbarian officers (Arbogast, the Frank), who set up the schoolmaster Eugenius as emperor. These two men made a last attempt to restore Paganism; but they could

not hold their position against Theodosius, who at the head of his Gothicized army came forward at once as the champion of Christianity and the avenger of Valentinian. Among his officers was a young Visigothic chieftain named Alaric, who thus got his first peep at the Italy he was one day to invade with such startling effect.

The victory of Theodosius brought the whole Empire again under a single ruler, and the new emperor, who had purged Rome of the re-established idols, was a strong Athanasian. He summoned the second General Council (381), which confirmed the condemnation of Arianism, which the Nicene Assembly had decreed. Thus after more than half a century the Church adhered to its original decision, though during the interval it seems probable that a majority of its adherents had held Arian views.

Theodosius energetically enforced the decision of the Council, and warmly promoted all sorts of religious work within his vast empire. He proved his sincerity by submitting to the rebukes of the great St. Ambrose, and undergoing the severe penance which the Bishop imposed, and publicly professing his penitence for an act of cruelty unworthy of a Christian emperor. His zeal and ability held the Empire together till the end of his life, and gave to most parts of it a temporary prosperity to which they had long been unaccustomed; but as soon as he died (A.D. 395) the Empire was again divided, and the troubles from the Goths were speedily renewed.

Alaric now becomes the representative of the feeling that the Goths have long enough fought the battles of the emperors, and may now begin to fight for themselves. He perhaps did not care to serve under the degenerate successors of Theodosius. So he established himself in the north of Illyrium, a convenient

position from which to descend on either the Eastern or the Western Empire. The former attracted him first. At the head of his Visigoths he descended through Moesia and captured Corinth, Argos, and Sparta. Constantinople was just then on bad terms with Rome, and the governors of the East managed to persuade their formidable invader to turn his steps towards the Western Empire. The latter was at this time chiefly controlled by a Vandal¹ named Stilicho, who had married a daughter of Theodosius. Thus in the ensuing struggle the leaders on both sides were sons of Teuton barbarians.

Alaric had returned to his Illyrian head-quarters loaded with plunder, and yet the honoured ally of the Eastern Court. In the course of A.D. 400 he descended through the Venetian plain, accompanied not only by a host of warriors, but also by their wives and children. We cannot trace his course with any accuracy; but in the course of the next year we find him advancing on Milan. Hitherto his march seems to have been leisurely, and nowhere fiercely, resisted. Stilicho had many other difficulties to meet, including an independent invasion of Italy by another set of Goths. It was probably thought that Alaric would confine himself to plunder, and would return when satiated with spoils. But at length a large army was collected, though at the cost of weakening the defences of the Rhine and of Britain. A desperate but indecisive battle was followed by a treaty under which the Visigoths retired to their old headquarters. There were

¹ The Vandals were another Teutonic tribe. We must not think either of Stilicho or Alaric as a "barbarian." Both of them had spent years at the Roman Court, and had acquired much of Roman civilization, while they escaped much of its corruption.

naturally great rejoicings in Rome ; but Stilicho's long delay in collecting an adequate army was justified by the events which followed the weakening of the borders. Three groups of barbarians, the Vandals, the Sueves, and the Alans cut their way across the Rhine, and carried desolation into Gaul ; while Picts and Scots burst through into Britain, and Saxon pirates ravaged the British shores. Next there were fresh barbarian invasions of Italy ; but Stilicho again proved equal to the emergency, and inflicted a crushing defeat on the invaders among the hills of Tuscany. But Alaric meanwhile was husbanding his resources, and in 407 he again crossed the north-east border of Italy, and demanded £160,000 as the price he would take for withdrawal. Stilicho actually recommended that this demand should be conceded. The troops in Britain had set up their own general (Constantine) as a claimant for the western throne. He had crossed to Gaul, and marched with little resistance as far as Arles. Stilicho seems to have been almost at his wit's end, and to have adopted the desperate policy of buying the alliance of Alaric. But this humiliating arrangement was more than the pride of Rome would bear. The Vandal Regent had naturally made many enemies. Some of these took advantage of his temporary absence from Rome to carry through a Revolution. The chief ministers of the emperor were put to death, and Stilicho refused to add to the general confusion by appealing to force. He surrendered on a promise that his life should be spared ; and the breaking of that promise saved him from seeing the capture of the imperial city which he had served so well. It is probable that those who overthrew the great Vandal had the sympathy of the Emperor Honorius, who was a weak man, with a weak man's occasional love of self-assertion and fitful

self-confidence. He seems to have shown his energy chiefly in heretic hunting; but his refusal to pay a demand for more money which Alaric now made, seems to indicate that he probably shared in the indignation aroused by Stilicho's recent attitude towards the Visigothic king. The refusal of Honorius was followed by a fresh invasion, which vindicated Stilicho's view of the necessity of conciliation, and also proved that there was no one fit to take Stilicho's place. Alaric marched straight on Rome (A.D. 408), and seized the river banks on both sides of the city. Starvation and pestilence soon compelled the proud Romans to send a submissive embassy. Alaric's terms were so heavy that the Senate gravely discussed whether Rome should turn heathen, on the chance that the old gods might come to their help. But the chance was not thought good enough, and so it was agreed to pay £300,000 in gold and silver, 4000 silken tunics, 3000 scarlet-dyed hides, and 3000 lbs. of pepper.¹ Alaric then raised the siege; but in the negotiations that followed Honorius so far lost his temper as to swear by his own head that he would make no terms with the Visigoth. If he had sworn by the Almighty, we are told that he would probably have broken the oath, trusting to the Deity's good nature. But the emperor's head was another matter. So the negotiations were broken off, and the siege was renewed. The Romans, however, were not disposed to starve in order to save the imperial dignity. They therefore elected a new emperor, who quickly came to terms with Alaric. Then a fresh quarrel broke out. There was a third siege, and ultimately the Goths got into the city, and proceeded to sack

¹ This item is taken by Mr. Hodgkin as an indication that the Goths had lost their appetites in the climate of Italy.

it. The horrors that followed seem to have been less terrible than might have been expected. The Goths were Christians (Arians). They respected sanctuaries, and committed fewer outrages than were usual when soldiers were let loose on a city. Nevertheless the fact that Rome had been taken by barbarians, and exposed to their mercies, naturally affected the imagination of all thoughtful men. It is said to have set Augustine writing his great work—*The City of God*—in which he contrasts the abiding city with the world's mistress that was now reduced to ruins.

Alaric only stayed a few days at Rome. He had formed a plan of conquering Africa, so he led his men southwards. But he died at Reggio, while waiting for favourable winds to take him over the Mediterranean. He was buried in the bed of a river which was temporarily diverted from its course by the labour of slaves, who were then put to death, in order that none might be able to insult the dead body of Rome's conqueror.

HISTORIC SUMMARY OF CHAPTER III.

The Goths were Teutons who in third century had settled in south of what is now Russia, and thence made incursions into Empire. Aurelian ceded Dacia to some Ostrogoths. (c. 270.) They adopted Arian Christianity. Ulfilas translated New Testament and much of Old into Moeso-Gothic. (c. 350.)

Theological Controversies were raging in Empire. Constantius II. (337 to 361) adopted Arianism. Julian (361 to 363) tried to restore Paganism. The Donatists were strong in Africa. (See page 41.)

The Huns, a Tartar race, burst on Goths. (c. 375.) Many Goths were allowed to cross Danube to become subjects of Empire. (376.) Disputes and mutual outrages ensue, followed by war. Goths gain great victory at Hadrianople. (378.)

Theodosius (Emperor of East 378 to 395) infused fresh energy into East, and induces many Goths to serve him. In West the Gauls set up Maximus (383), but Theodosius restores Valentinian II. Arbogast kills V., and establishes Eugenius. They champion Paganism, but Theodosius defeats them at Frigidus (394) and becomes sole emperor.

Council of Constantinople (381) decides for Athanasianism.

Ambrose (c. 340 to 397); elected Bishop of Milan (374); resists Arians and Pagans; compels Theodosius to do penance for cruelty.

Jerome (331 to 420); secretary to Pope; retires to Holy Land (385) and translates Bible into Latin (the Vulgate).

Augustine (354 to 430); converted and baptized by Ambrose (387); Bishop of Hippo (395); does much to systematize and fix doctrine of Church in West.

Alaric (360 to 410); King of Visigoths (c. 395); ravages Moesia and Greece; then allied to Eastern Emperor. In 400 he descends on Italy. Other barbarians invade at same time, but are repulsed by Stilicho the Vandal. Alaric retires after doubtful battle of Pollentia (402 or 3); returns in 407; besieges Rome (408, 409, 410) and partially sacks it. He then starts towards Africa, but dies at Reggio in 410. The Goths then pass to Gaul and Spain nominally in service of Empire.

IV.

FALL OF WESTERN EMPIRE.

WE may notice here that since the death of Theodosius the Great (A.D. 364) there had been two Empires. Diocletian had sought to maintain a certain unity of policy and government throughout the dominions of the four emperors; and this ideal had been more or less kept in view by his successors. But the sons of Theodosius, who ruled over the East and West respectively, scarcely attempted any co-operation. The Western Empire, whose fortunes we will follow first, was left to bear the barbarian assaults with little or no help from Constantinople.

Alaric was succeeded as king of the Visigoths by Ataulfus, who married Placidia the daughter of Theodosius, and led his Goths through Gaul into Spain. He and his successors succeeded in building up a great kingdom, extending from the Loire to Gibraltar, and from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean. Thus a large slice was practically detached from the Western Empire.

Before the Visigoths reached Gaul, another set of barbarians were ravaging that province. These were chiefly Vandals, who had migrated from the western part of what we now call Hungary (406 A.D.), and, having crossed the Rhine, cut their way through Gaul and Spain. Ultimately (428 A.D.) they crossed over to the Roman province of Africa, where

they secured a rich dominion. But an even more pressing danger was threatening the Western Empire, while its outlying parts were thus passing under the authority of Visigoths and Vandals. This danger came from that formidable race which we last heard of as driving the Goths into the Eastern Empire.

The Huns, unlike the other chief barbarian invaders of the Empire, did not even descend from that Aryan stock to which the ancestry of Romans, Greeks, Celts, and Germans alike is traced. They were Turanians, connected perhaps with the savage Tartar Hiongnu, against whom the Chinese built their wall in the third century before Christ. The Hiongnu seem to have fled before a people called the Siempi, who descended upon them in A.D. 93. Nearly 300 years later the Huns appear in history; and from their fierce onslaught the panic-struck Goths seek shelter within the Empire they were soon to ravage. Whether these Huns were descendants of the Hiongnu, and if so, what they had been doing during the interval, must be considered doubtful; nor do we know how much to believe of the accounts that have come down to us of their appearance and habits. We are told that they had no houses; that they ate and slept on horseback; that their food was uncooked, unless to lie between a horse's back and the thighs of its rider be considered a cooking; that their backs were crooked and their faces scarred; and that they far surpassed all other barbarians in ugliness and ferocity.

The Goths and other Teutons seem to have soon rallied from the terror which the first Hun onslaughts inspired. At any rate, the Tartars did not succeed in breaking through into the Empire, till they came under the rule of Attila, a man who seems to have had a quite extraordinary capacity for directing

these savage people. He is said to have got his authority recognized northward as far as Denmark, and eastward as far as China. We must presume that the recognition was of a shadowy sort so far as the more distant tribes were concerned. But at any rate his fame was sufficiently great to reach Constantinople, and to dazzle the imagination of a young lady of the imperial family, the daughter of that Placidia who married Ataulfus the Visigoth, and who subsequently became Empress of the West. Placidia's daughter Honoria had been sent to the capital of the East, and actually invited the great Hun to marry her. Attila does not seem to have answered this proposal. But presently we find him invading the Eastern Empire more than once, and being propitiated with splendid gifts. Next he turned his attention to the West, and demanded Honoria as his bride, and the Empire as her dowry. This mild request was met by the reply that Honoria was married, and that in any case the Empire could not be ruled by a woman. Attila then expressed his willingness to be satisfied with half the Empire for himself; and when this too was refused he began to organize a great invasion. At the head of a vast horde, which the Roman writer estimated to contain 600,000 fighting men, he burst into Gaul, where Vandals, Visigoths, Franks and Burgundians were fighting with one another, and with the Keltic populations, and what remained of Roman armies. The huge army, which must have included many Slavonic and Teuton auxiliaries, entered Gaul at its north-eastern corner, and succeeded in advancing as far as Orleans. But the Tartar invasion united for a time all the Aryan competitors. An immense army was gathered in defence of what civilization and Christianity was still to be found in Gaul. Attila had to retire from Orleans, and was defeated with

frightful slaughter somewhere in the neighbourhood of Chalons. The victors' losses were very heavy, and the Huns were able to resume their retreat to their old Transylvanian head-quarters. But at least Europe was saved from the threatened domination of Tartar and heathen.¹ Attila was, however, still sufficiently powerful to be able to renew the struggle in the following year. This time it was Italy which had to endure all that Tartar cruelty, greed, and lust could inflict. At length the invaders drew near to Rome, and were met by ambassadors from the city. Among these came the Bishop of Rome, Pope Leo I., a man of great intellect and high character, to whom tradition ascribes the credit of having induced the Hun to accept reasonable terms, and to leave Rome unmolested. We would gladly know more of the meeting between these two men, one of whom was building up that spiritual empire which still dominates the largest section of the Christian world, while the other represented a vast barbarian empire, which at the time seemed so much more powerful, but which was to prove scarcely more lasting than his own life. Even now the apparently stronger fell back before the apparently weaker, satisfied with a promised tribute, or awed by the reputation of the imperial city, or by the commanding personality of its bishop. He retired to his Trans-alpine head-quarters, and died in the following year, choked by his own blood. He had just married the last of his wives, and had drunk to excess in honour of the occasion. So in his bridal night the great barbarian's life came to a foul end. But the fame of his deeds won for him a leading place in the myths of many races. To the Christians of the Empire he was known as "the Scourge of

¹ The Visigoths and Vandals were Christians, as will be explained hereafter.

God," the typical barbarian sent by the Divine will to punish the sins of professing Christians, animated by a special hatred of all the symbols of religion, irresistible by fleshly arms, and only turned back by the prayers and courage of a few saintly men and women. For the battles in which he was defeated, no less than the last retreat from Italy, were confidently attributed to supernatural interferences. To the barbarians, on the other hand, he seemed a hero-king. Germans, Goths, Scandinavians, and Hungarians claimed him in after years as a glory to their several nationalities; and centuries after his death he appears, as King Etzel, among the heroes of the Nibelungen-lied. We have no means of judging what elements of truth there may be in the mass of legends of which Attila is the hero. They confirm, however, the traditions of the vastness of his empire and the brilliancy of his achievements. We can scarcely doubt that he possessed in rare degree the qualities of a conqueror, and even of a ruler; and perhaps the strongest evidence of his greatness is found in the fact that after his death the Huns practically disappear from European history.

Our attention must next be directed to the Vandals, whom we last spoke of as cutting their way through Spain, and thence crossing over to Africa. This was in A.D. 429. The king of the Vandals was now Genseric, who must rank with Alaric and Attila as one of the three greatest leaders of barbarian invaders during the fifth century. The province of Africa was already in a state of confusion when the Vandals arrived. A large portion of its people adhered to a movement which had begun early in the fourth century, and which numbered among its first leaders a couple of bishops, each of whom bore the name of Donatus. To understand the movement we must go back to the Diocletian persecution,

which had aimed (amongst other things) at destroying all the sacred books of the Christians. When the persecution ceased, the question arose, How were those Christians to be treated who had surrendered copies of the Scriptures to the persecutors in order to save their lives? The government of Constantine was inclined to treat them leniently, and the same view seems to have been generally taken by the bishops. But there were many who held that the "traditores" should be permanently disgraced and disqualified from holding office in the Church. This opinion was specially common among the hot-blooded Africans, and it led to a formidable schism in the Church. Constantine decided against the Donatists, as was to be expected from the general character of his rule. He was in favour of peace and quiet and reconciliation. But the Donatists were so numerous and fanatical that they set up an organization of their own; and soon there were rival bishops and churches in most of the cities of Africa.¹ Finding he could not suppress them, the emperor decided to extend toleration to the Dissidents. But his successor renewed the struggle, and the Donatists appealed to the populace against the government. They denied the right of the emperor to meddle in ecclesiastical matters, and met force by force. The struggle lasted on into the fifth century. In 411 S. Augustine, the Archbishop of Hippo, arranged a conference at Carthage, which was attended by 279 Donatist bishops, and by 286 of the other party. But it failed to effect a settlement. Persecution was again resorted to, and the persecuted majority welcomed the Vandal invaders, and rose against the Roman rulers.

¹ *i.e.*, of the Roman province, North Africa, as we should say, not Egypt, &c.

The war lasted five years (430 to 435), and was then suspended by a treaty under which Carthage, and the district immediately round it, were to remain under the Empire, but Hippo and the larger part of the province were to be under Genseric and the Vandals, subject only to a tribute to Rome. This peace was observed for over four years; but a renewal of hostilities was followed by the capture of Carthage. Genseric next turned his attention to ship-building, and soon had the strongest fleet on the Mediterranean. He employed it in piratical expeditions against the coasts around, often leaving it to the winds to decide who should be his victims.

In 455 there took place in Rome one of the frequent violent changes of government. The Emperor Valentinian was murdered, and his successful rival Maximius compelled the widowed Empress Eudoxia to marry him. The lady appealed to Genseric to take up her cause. The Vandal readily enough accepted the invitation, and within three months his ships were in the mouth of the Tiber. Within the city a panic rose. Maximius was torn in pieces by the people; but Pope Leo got the Vandals to consent to fairly moderate terms. Genseric would not follow Attila's example, and abstain from entering Rome. But he promised that there should be no killing, or burning, or torturing to compel the discovery of treasure. The Vandals, however, spent fourteen days in Rome, laying hands on statues, gold and jewels, and carrying off the spoils of churches and palaces to their ships. Many thousand captives were also carried to Africa. Eudoxia sailed with the barbarians whom she had summoned to Rome. One of her daughters married a son of Genseric.

In the ensuing confusion the armies of Gaul elected one

Avitus to the Empire. He was deposed and turned into a bishop by Ricimer, who was half Sueve and half Visigoth. Public opinion would scarcely have tolerated such a barbarian on the imperial throne. But Ricimer was for sixteen years the real ruler of so much of the West as still acknowledged Roman rule. He set up and overthrew emperor over emperor. He sacked Rome when it opposed him, and the city seems to have suffered more at the hands of this subject than it did from either Alaric or Genseric.

At length Ricimer was struck down by disease (571), but the succession of brief reigns by incompetent emperors continued for four years more. Then another barbarian, Odoacer, rose to supremacy, and decided that one emperor was quite enough for the world. He ruled over Italy under the title of "the Patrician," acknowledging only some vague sort of supremacy to the Constantinople emperor.

There has been much idle discussion as to whether this can properly be called the End of the Western Empire. Technically no doubt the Roman Empire remained, with the new capital which Constantine had built on the Bosphorus, nominally embracing West and East as in the days of Theodosius. But for all practical purposes there was now no Empire in the West. Africa was under the Vandals. Most of Spain and Gaul was under the Visigoths. The Suevians were supreme over most of what is now called Portugal. The Franks ruled most of the north of Gaul; the Burgundians had established themselves on the north-west of Italy. Britain was abandoned to the strife of Britons, Picts, and Scots with one another, and with piratical German and Scandinavian invaders. Odoacer reigned in Italy. In short, there was not a corner of Western Europe where the authority of Emperor was anything but a name. To all

intents and purposes the Western Empire was dead, and the sceptre of the Emperors was transferred to barbarians.

If we try to account for the triumph of the latter, we may first notice that the transfer to Constantinople of the headquarters of the government had necessarily weakened the West. Even when there was a Western Emperor his capital was selected according to the whim or the exigencies of the moment. This must have involved a loss of continuity in the administration of affairs.

Secondly, we may notice that the triumph of the barbarians was largely due to the moral degeneracy of the Romans. Luxury had enervated the rulers; and after all allowance for exaggerations have been made, we must attach some weight to the terrible pictures of the vices of the Empire which contemporary writers have drawn. Christianity had done something (not much) to mitigate the evil. But the virtues of Christians were scarcely those needed to resist the barbarian invaders. Purity, self-denial, patience under calamity, and a fixing the thoughts on a future world, were the habits of mind which the Christian teachers chiefly insisted upon. The monastic life was their highest ideal, and this removed men from military service, and prevented their having children to inherit their virtues. The barbarians on the other hand had many vices; but these were not generally of a sort so fatal to manliness as those of the Empire; while *their* characteristic virtues were those most conducive to military success.

The wide prevalence of slavery was another of the fundamental causes of the fall of the Western Empire. We read of single citizens possessing ten or even twenty thousand slaves. Why should these care to fight for their masters

against the barbarian invaders? Their interests lay all the other way. Accordingly we are not surprised to read of 40,000 slaves fleeing from Rome to join Alaric between two of his sieges of the city. The same sort of thing no doubt happened at every invasion, and thus the barbarian armies would be swollen by swarms of Roman subjects.

Those of the Italian poor who were not slaves had been demoralized by the free distribution of food by which their support, or at least their acquiescence, had been purchased for centuries. Italian corn growing had long since been destroyed. There was little free labour in Italy, and the poorer freemen had become mere hangers on to the rich. When we add such facts to those which we enumerated in our first chapter (see page 56-8), we have perhaps sufficiently accounted for the fall of the Western Empire.

We must not regard the triumph of the barbarians as an unmixed evil. It involved indeed the destruction of an ancient and remarkable civilization. It introduced ages of disorder and violence in the place of the reign of law which Rome had built up. But the civilization had decayed. The Roman peace was maintained at the cost of crushing out all individuality and liberty among the great bulk of the population. It may be doubted whether Christianity itself could have done much with such materials as the Empire provided; and though it is easy to exaggerate the moral superiority of the barbarians, there is some truth in the eloquent passage with which I will conclude this chapter:

“Those wild tribes were bringing with them into the magic circle of the Western Church’s influence the very materials which she required for the building up of a future Christendom: comparative purity of morals; sacred respect for woman, for

family life, law, equal justice, individual freedom, and, above all, for honesty in word and deed; bodies untainted by hereditary effeminacy, hearts earnest though genial, and blessed with a strange willingness to learn, even from those whom they despised.¹

HISTORIC SUMMARY OF CHAPTER IV.

Placidia was on one side daughter of Theodosius, and on the other granddaughter of Valentinian. She was captured by Goths, and loved by King Ataulfus (successor to Alaric), and by Constantius the favourite of Emperor Honorius. She married Ataulfus (414), and they lead Visigoths to Spain. Ataulfus is slain, and Placidia returns to Rome, but Visigoths establish Arian Kingdom in Spain, extending northwards to Loire. Placidia marries Constantius (417). She is named Augusta, but on husband's death retires to Constantinople. Honorius dies (423), and Placidia wins throne of West by support of Eastern Emperor, Theodosius II. She lives till 451, but her son Valentinian III. is Emperor, and as he grows up Placidia loses authority.

Attila becomes sole King of Huns in 445. They had built up a sort of Empire over North-east of Europe and West of Asia. In 447 he invades Greece; attacks Constantinople and obtains heavy tribute. Then he claims Honoria, daughter of Placidia, and the Western Empire for her. He then asks for half Western Empire, and when this is refused allies himself with Franks and Vandals and invades Gaul, and having desolated north-east, descends towards Orleans, but is defeated by allied Romans and Teutons in Battle of Chalons (451). In 452 he invades Italy, but is

¹ From the preface to Kingsley's *Hypatia*. The acts of greed, faithlessness, and lust committed by Goths, Vandals, &c., seem a curious commentary on this passage. Yet the contemporary Christian writer S. Salvian declares the heretical barbarians to be loyal and pure when compared with the orthodox inhabitants of the Empire.

persuaded by Pope Leo to abstain from attacking Rome, and dies 453. The Huns soon cease to be an important factor in history.

The Vandals, a Teutonic race, migrated c. 406 from "West Hungary" to Belgic Gaul. They cross Rhine and fight way to Spain. They then conquer *Africa* under Genseric, establish Arianism, and organize piratical excursions all around. In 455 Empress Eudoxia invites them to invade Italy. They enter Rome, carry off much treasure and captives and Eudoxia.

Rome now chaotic. Ricimer practically supreme (456 to 472). Nine emperors in twenty years. Odoacer rises to prominence, and will have no more Emperors of the West (476).

V.

SOME FATHERS OF THE CHURCH.

To throw light on the intellectual tendencies of the period we have been speaking of, it will now be desirable to notice briefly some of the chief "Fathers" of the third and fourth centuries. We will begin with *Clement of Alexandria* (died c. 220). The great city by whose name he is distinguished from S. Clement of Rome was the intellectual capital of the world. Its Church was naturally affected by being in close contact with the most active philosophic enquirers. As in the first century Philo expounded a rationalistic and mystic Judaism in Alexandria; as in the second century Basileides derived from Alexandrian teachers the most rationalistic and mystic of the early heresies; so in the third century Clement and Origen were teaching in Alexandria what may best be described as a rationalistic and mystic Christianity. The four teachers resemble one another in the great stress that they lay on the doctrine, that the word of God speaking to men's hearts is the source of all good and all wisdom. The root idea of Clement's teaching is the belief that from this word of God proceeds what is good in the heretics whom he criticises, and in the heathen philosophers of former generations. He claims for himself the title of Gnostic, which was generally confined to heretical teachers. But Clement held that the pursuit of knowledge, which had led to the system-making and cunningly-devised cosmogonies of

these teachers, was a duty and a glory. Only it must be correlated with the fact, that while men are seeking after God, God is also seeking after men, and revealing Himself to them. This is his key to both the Old and the New Testament; but he is so imbued with the mystical spirit of Alexandria that he thinks it necessary to turn the old Hebrew stories into allegories, and to give them a mystical interpretation.

Clement's works belong chiefly to the years 193 to 211 A.D. The most important of them is called by a name which we may translate "Patchwork." It is an extraordinary medley of ill-assorted learning, piety, and ingenuity; "but one object runs through all, and this is to show what the true Christian Gnostic is, and what is his relation to philosophy." Faith, Love, and Knowledge are, according to Clement, the three successive stages of Christian progress. But Christians will have to pass through an education and purification after death before they can know as they are known.

Origen (185 to 254 A.D.) carried forward the teaching of Clement. He extended to the case of pagans and heretics the doctrine of education after death. All punishment was, in his view, purgatorial; and he implies, if he does not explicitly assert, that all men will be ultimately saved. Similarly, in the matter of allegorical interpretation, he goes further than his great master. He discards the literal meanings and propounds spiritual meanings for all the Old Testament stories. In the corrupt and over-civilized city of Alexandria the significance of the simple patriarchal incidents could scarcely be realized; and while Origen's expositions are often fanciful and far-fetched, they are made to illustrate a lofty Platonic form of Christianity. The question of his orthodoxy was frequently raised, both during his lifetime and after his death. He was driven from

Alexandria, and condemned by several local synods; but his opinions were not pronounced heretical by any General Council.

Passing now from Alexandria to the province of Africa, we find ourselves among a very different kind of teacher. *Tertullian* rivalled his contemporaries, *Clement* and *Origen*, in the vastness of his learning, and the incessant energy with which he laboured. But he had none of their large-hearted charity towards opponents. The narrowness of his views contrasts with the wideness of his knowledge. His spirit is the fervid, fanatical spirit of North Africa. It led him into numberless fierce controversies with heretics. It led him finally to join the small and narrow sect of *Montanists*, whose own views were pronounced heretical. Their literal interpretation of Scripture, their belief in the continuance of miracles, and especially of the speaking with "tongues" to which *S. Paul* refers, and above all perhaps their rigid asceticism, appealed to his fiery but sensuous imagination, to his rigid and narrow logic, to his love of self-sacrifice for its own sake. His temper was essentially sectarian, even when he was defending the doctrines of the Church against the various heretical sects. But he may yet be regarded as in some sense the founder of the distinctively Latin theology, and with less qualification, as the creator of the language in which it was expressed. *Clement* and *Origen* wrote, of course, in Greek. *Tertullian* started with a rude Punic Latin, and made it a vehicle for the expression of all the new ideas which Christianity and Ecclesiasticism and the conflicts of sects had brought into the world. Far more than any other man he must be regarded as the creator of mediæval Latin.

Cyprian (c. 200 to 258 A.D.) is the next African Father

we will notice. He was a disciple of Tertullian, and wrote in the same rhetorical style, and in the same narrow spirit. But his genius for organization was very serviceable to the Church of Africa. And the example thus set of discipline, order, and corporate efficiency, taught lessons which the bishops of Rome turned to account. It seems likely, however, that the harshness with which he treated those who had temporarily "lapsed," helped to form the feelings that were at the root of Donatism. (See page 41.) Severity of discipline in this case created more heresy than it repressed.

If the Roman Church owed its language chiefly to Tertullian and its organization to Cyprian, it may almost equally be said to owe its systematized theology to a third great African. *Augustine of Hippo* (354 to 430 A.D.) was educated at Carthage. In his early licentiousness; in the zeal with which he flung himself into Manicheism, and again into Platonism and Pantheism; in the outpourings of his "Confessions"; in the record of his spiritual wrestlings; in his pursuit of the Beautiful, as well as the True; in his craving to love and to be loved, we find constant evidences of his fervid, sensuous African nature. At length he found quiet in the Catholic Faith; but the peace of his spirit only stimulated and directed the activity of his intellect. The Nicene Creed contained for him the absolutely essential, the recognition of an unseen Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier existing in perfect unity. But he must go on to discover the relations of this Creed to the problem of evil, and the relation of divine grace to the human will, and to Sacraments and Church order. Thus he built up the system of theological doctrines, which has in the main been accepted by the majority of western Christians down to our own time. There was little novelty about any

of his doctrines. What was new was the presentation of them as a harmonious and scientific whole.

A little earlier than this, the most illustrious of the Latin Fathers, came the most illustrious of those who wrote in Greek.

Athanasius (c. 296 to 373) was born in Alexandria. He grew up amidst the turmoil that the preaching of Arius aroused. At the Nicene Council (A.D. 325) the young Athanasius took the lead against the new doctrines; and for the rest of his long life he was the most prominent champion of the decision of the Council. Condemned by minor councils, exiled again and again from the see to which he was elected in A.D. 326, opposed and persecuted by emperor after emperor, he sustained the apparently unequal contest. He saw Arianism or Semi-arianism accepted by probably the majority of Christians both within the Empire, and among the barbarians who were breaking across its bounds. But at length he was restored to Alexandria in time to see the turn of the tide. The great controversy in which he spent all his energies has sometimes been derided as frivolous and unmeaning. But it must be remembered that the Arians regarded Christ as neither God nor man, but as an intermediate being; and those who attach importance either to the divinity or to the humanity of the Nazarene, cannot think that the points in dispute were small or insignificant.

Ambrose (c. 337 to 397 A.D.) is chiefly interesting to us on account of two very dramatic and significant incidents in which he played the leading part. In A.D. 374 the Bishoprick of Milan fell vacant, and a violent dispute as to who should occupy it at once arose between the Arians and their opponents. Ambrose was at that time a layman, and prefect of Milan. He

addressed the rival mobs who had gathered together for the election. But a child in the crowd, who had come down to see the ceremonial, and to whom the prefect had been pointed out, cried aloud, "Ambrose Bishop!" The people took this as a divine intimation that their choice should fall on the wise and popular governor; and so completely was the election in their hands, that this layman, said by some accounts to be as yet unbaptized, was hastily passed through the preliminary stages of deacon and priest, and was then consecrated Bishop. This story vividly illustrates the democratic character of an episcopal election in the fourth century. But the chief distinction of Ambrose is the courage with which he confronted the power of the emperors. The Emperor of the West, or rather his mother, the Regent Justina, demanded ~~that two of~~ the Milan churches should be assigned to her Arian co-religionists. Ambrose firmly refused; and his influence and popularity were so great that though force was threatened, it was not used. Then came the victory of Theodosius (see page 31), which was followed by the persecution of the Arians. But Ambrose, though a strong partisan, was not disposed to wink at the crimes of an orthodox emperor. Theodosius had ordered a general massacre of the people of Thessalonica (A.D. 390), in order to avenge the death of one of his officials. The brave Milan Bishop proceeded to excommunicate the powerful Emperor. And Theodosius submitted to what must have seemed a strange inversion of parts, to a Constantinople despot. Only after eight months' penance was he absolved, and then only on condition that in future there should be an interval of thirty days between a death sentence and its execution. These incidents clearly show how strong a position the Church was attaining in the West, though it must not be

supposed that all emperors were equally disposed to acknowledge ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

Jerome (342 to 420 ?) was chiefly educated at Rome. An enthusiastic scholar, he has told us that on his conversion the hardest temptation he had to conquer was the wish to continue his studies in Pagan literature. Ultimately, however, he dedicated all his scholarship to religious matters. In his hermit life in Syria he learnt Hebrew and discovered many MSS. Returning to Rome in A.D. 389, he began his great work, the Latin Version of the whole Bible, which, under the name of the Vulgate, became the Authorized Version of Scripture for the Western Church. He also laboured hard for the spread of Monasticism, and induced many high-born Roman ladies to adopt a celibate life. He thus provoked the enmity of many powerful families, and had at length to fly from Rome. Several of his female disciples accompanied him to Palestine and Egypt, and then back to Bethlehem, where he established three monasteries for women and one for men. He prosecuted his literary labours with zeal, and showed a daring originality in scholarship which contrasts with the humility which made him, in other matters, defer implicitly to the authority and practice of the Church at Rome. His influence probably did much to encourage the growth of Papal power, which will be the subject of our next chapter.

VI.

THE RISE OF THE PAPACY.

WHILE the Western Empire was falling to pieces, the Western Church was advancing towards the extraordinary position which it occupied during the Middle Ages. When Constantine established Christianity, as the religion of the Empire, the Church
+ *as a whole* was absolutely without organization. Its unity was of a purely ideal sort. It consisted of a number of different churches, each under its own bishop, each bound to its neighbours by religious sympathy, but with no common government.
+ Neighbouring churches might indeed be grouped together round some great city, whose bishop ranked as a patriarch of the whole group. But at least the patriarchates were separate units, independent of one another, though they might seek advice or help from outside their own borders.

+ The Council of Nicaea modified this independence. It brought the ideal unity into practical, though only partial, operation. It drew up an authoritative creed for the whole church, and showed how the different churches were in some measure a single body. But oecumenical councils could only be very occasional events. To bring bishops together from all parts of the Empire was no easy matter. Travelling was slow and costly. Barbarian invasions added to its dangers and difficulties. Bishops could not well be spared from their dioceses; and while local councils were frequent, there were

only four which had a fair claim to be regarded as representing the universal Church.

But meanwhile the foundations of a more effective unity and central government for Western Christendom were being laid. The unique position which Rome had held for many centuries naturally gave to its Bishop a specially dignified position, and when the Western Emperors ceased to make Rome the head-quarters of their administration, the great city gradually became the metropolis of the Western Church.

The Rise of the Papacy, like all great movements in history, must have fitted in somehow with the tendencies and needs of the ages in which it took place; and (as is usual in such cases) everything that happened seemed to help on the movement. The See of Rome first secured a unique position because Rome was the capital of the world; but its position could scarcely have become so strong if Constantine had not transferred the capital to Constantinople. Otherwise the power and splendour of the emperors would have overshadowed the popes. As it was, they gained dignity from the peculiar charm Rome still exercised over men's imaginations. The Empire was still called the Roman Empire. The highest glory of Constantinople was to be a new Rome, and the prestige of the city on the Tiber tended to be more and more associated with the popes.

The Rise of the Papacy was further helped by the imperial idea. In secular matters men had long been accustomed to imperialism. It seemed natural to apply the same system to ecclesiastical affairs. An autocratic government fitted in also with the ideas of discipline and organization which had always been highly esteemed among Romans, and which had by them been spread over the civilized world. But if the Church was

to become an imperial monarchy, it could scarcely have any ruler but the bishop either of Rome or of Constantinople. And even if the Eastern Bishops had not been kept in subjection by the emperors, at the threshold of whose palaces they lived, Rome would have naturally tended towards ecclesiastical supremacy in the West.

The peculiar bent of the Roman mind contributed in another way to the growth of the papal power. While the Eastern Churches were torn by metaphysical discussions on the Trinity and the nature of Christ, the more practical Romans were building up an elaborate organization—a compact body, in which unity should be maintained by a highly centralized authority. As early as A.D. 250, when Christianity was still an illegal religion, the authority of the Roman prelate was recognized by ten suffragan bishops, who ruled over the churches of neighbouring places. This authority gradually extended over the churches of Italy, Gaul, Spain, and Africa. Its character at first was very vague. Yet even in the fourth century it was sufficient to induce all parties in the local churches to seek support and countenance from Rome.

Many causes, besides those already noticed, helped to strengthen the position of the popes. They claimed to be successors of S. Peter, whom they asserted to have held a sort of primacy among the apostles. We are not concerned with the validity of these claims. For our present purpose it is enough to notice that they undoubtedly proved a source of additional prestige to the Papacy. Moreover, the popes were by far the richest of the Western Bishops. Gifts and legacies for religious purposes were becoming common throughout Christendom, and it was natural that such gifts should be

largest in the city where wealth had most accumulated. The wide diffusion of the Latin tongue was another help. Latin was the official language of the Empire. It naturally became the language of the Western Church. It was also the language which the great writers of the fourth century used; and the works of Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, &c., helped to fix a Latin character on Western Christendom.

But in any enumeration of the causes of the growth of the Papacy it would be unfair to omit the ability and character of many of the early popes. None of them were men of genius, but this was perhaps not unfavourable to their power; for genius is apt to be erratic, or at least to seem so to average mortals. A genius is generally in advance of his age. He is probably persecuted or neglected by his contemporaries. An Athanasius or an Augustine on the Papal throne would probably have weakened Papal authority by original speculations; but the popes of the fourth century were almost all men of that inferior insight which we call common-sense. They were orthodox, moderate, sensible men, with a capacity for ruling; men who combined a respect for antiquity with a recognition of the necessity for adapting themselves and the Church to altering conditions. If they sometimes seem greedy for power, it is fair to notice that amid the confusions of barbarian invasions and the weakening of secular authority the Church was becoming more and more the one witness for law and order and discipline, and that the maintenance of the Church's strength seemed more and more to depend on its increased centralization. The world needed, more even than it usually does, some representative of whatever moral and spiritual forces survived; some one who could speak in the name of religion, and to whose arbitration disputes could be referred.

Near the beginning of the fifth century Innocent I. was elected to the Papacy. He was a man of bold, imperious nature; a patriotic Roman, eager to extend the authority of the city. He distinctly claimed filial obedience from all the churches of Italy, Gaul, Spain, and Africa. Moreover, he interfered in Eastern affairs, upholding Chrysostom, the eloquent archbishop of Constantinople, against the imperial government. His interference effected little; but it helped to strengthen his position in the West. Then came the capture of Rome by Alaric. This event, which might have been expected to weaken the Papacy, really strengthened it. For the Visigoths were Christians, though of the Arian sort. Their wrath and greed were chiefly vented against the Pagans; and when they retired the popes were left more than ever supreme within the city.

The next important movement in Western Christianity was the Pelagian controversy; which turned essentially on the old question between Free Will and Predestination. Does man's sin spring from his own will, or from a corruption naturally engendered in the offspring of Adam? Is his salvation obtained by his own effort, or by divine grace? The Briton, Pelagius, accepted the former alternative on each question, and visited Rome, Africa, and Palestine to spread his doctrine. Augustine led the opposition to this doctrine, and the Western churches were soon torn by the controversy. We may notice in passing that neither party laid sufficient stress on the facts of heredity, which have a most vital relation to the controversy. But from our present point of view, the chief importance of Pelagianism is that it temporarily divided Western Christendom, while in the long run it deepened man's sense of the need of some unquestionable authority.

In 440 Leo the Great became pope. He seems to have been + the first to definitely attempt to realize the magnificent vision of a universal Church thoroughly organized, with its centre at Rome. Like most of his greatest predecessors, he cared little for doctrinal disputes. His own theology was of the simplest. It extended little beyond the Apostles' Creed. He cared more for active philanthropy than for fasting, ceremonial, or dogmatic minutiae. When he attacks heretics it is chiefly for immorality; and he tried to set an example of a Christian life which should justify his office to the nations. We have seen that he was able to render conspicuous service to Rome when the Huns and when the Vandals were at her gates. + These, however, were but episodes in a twenty years' Papacy. spent in active and able work. He was equally distinguished as a preacher, and as an organizer; and he left the Church + in such a condition of efficiency that it passed unshaken through the catastrophes that marked the Fall of the Western Empire.

The beginning of the sixth century brought to Italy a brief period of comparative peace and prosperity. This boon came from a strange quarter. A fresh horde of barbarians, the Ostrogoths, crossed the Alps in the winter of 488-9 under the command of Theodoric, and after a four years' struggle overthrew the supremacy of Odoacer. Theodoric was then recognized as King of Italy by the Constantinople government, and soon showed a capacity for peaceful rule and a taste for civilization and culture, which raise him above the Alarics, Attilas, and Genseric, whose achievements were almost exclusively in the sphere of war. Theodoric reigned for thirty-three years (493 to 526). Like most of the Goths, he was of the Arian persuasion; but he adopted the statesman-

like policy of tolerating the existing Church, and seeking to fuse Romans and Goths. His Ostrogothic followers became a sort of armed aristocracy, and with their help law and justice were rigorously upheld. Agriculture and the arts of peace were fostered; and the Arian sovereign encouraged Catholic Bishops to meet in synods for the consideration of disputed questions. Towards the close of his reign he unfortunately quarrelled with the pope, and threw him into prison. The orthodox Catholics seem to have conspired against the king; but we have no means of deciding whether their plots began before the pope's imprisonment, or to which party the blame for the breach must be chiefly assigned. Among the Catholics whom Theodoric imprisoned and afterwards put to death was Boethius, with whom Roman literature may be said to close. It is noticeable that the "Consolations" of this Christian writer are derived from philosophy rather than from religion, and are fortified by the examples of heathen philosophers rather than of saints and martyrs.

Theodoric lived and reigned to the age of seventy-three. One of his last acts was to arrange a system for the election of future popes, under which the clergy and laity of Rome were to exercise the suffrage; but the approval of the Italian sovereign was to be necessary before a pope could enter on his office. This remained the theory of papal elections till the choice was transferred to the College of Cardinals.

A few words must here be given to the Rise of Monasticism, a movement which indirectly contributed not a little to the Rise of the Papacy. For the monks, by their detachment from ordinary ties, were generally more disposed than other Christians to exalt their profession and its head.

Monasticism was far older than Christianity; and from the

earliest ages of the latter some enthusiasts had sought to attain holiness by a hermit life. The first, however, to secure any great reputation by so doing was S. Anthony, who was born of rich Egyptian parents in about the year A.D. 251. At the age of twenty he tried the plan recommended to the rich young man in the gospel. He gave away all his wealth, and took to supplying his frugal needs by the labour of his hands. Subsequently he fled to the desert, and lived for ten years in a cell. He died in A.D. 356 at the age of 105. But his example was widely followed, so that the Thebaid desert came to be peopled by hermits. Pachonius modified the ascetic life by gathering hermits into groups, who lived under authority and according to definite rules. This system rapidly grew, so that it is said that in the fifth century half the males of Egypt were monks. The system had already spread into Syria and Asia Minor, and had been carried by S. Jerome into the Western Church. It was introduced into Gaul by S. Martin of Tours about A.D. 360. But the chief development of Western Monasticism was due to S. Benedict. Born in 480, and sent to Rome for his education, he chose "holy ignorance," and ran away to a cell in a small village. Hither came many, attracted by his fame, so that he had to fly once more in search of solitude. Ultimately, however, he became the head of a monastery and the founder of an order. Silence, humility, and obedience were its characteristic virtues; worship, study, and manual labour its sole recognized employments. The Benedictine Order spread with great rapidity over Italy. Thence it was carried into Gaul, and was brought by a second S. Augustine into England. Everywhere it established centres of active philanthropic and missionary zeal, which kept up the best traditions of Christianity, and fought the battles of orthodoxy.

We shall tell in a later chapter how Pope Gregory carried forward the work of Innocent and Leo, and how the barbarian conquerors were converted from Arianism to Catholicism.

HISTORIC SUMMARY OF CHAPTER VI.

The Bishop of Rome was naturally chief ecclesiastic in Italy, and to some extent in "Gauls" and "Africa." When emperors ceased to live at Rome the prestige of Rome chiefly exalted popes. They were helped by (supposed) succession from S. Peter, wide diffusion of Latin tongue, great wealth, eminence of Latin fathers in fourth century.

A.D. 347.—Athanasian majority in Council of Sardica gives right of appeal to Bishop of Rome. This is confirmed by Valentinian III. in 421.

A.D. 385.—Decretal of Sicirius claims authority in Spain and other churches outside Italy.

Innocent I., A.D. 402 to 417.—The Papacy strengthened as the Western Empire decayed. Innocent claimed obedience from Italy, Gaul, Spain, and Africa. He interfered in East for S. Chrysostom. The African Church appealed to Rome against acquittal of Pelagius by East 417.

Zosimus 417; Boniface 418; Celestinus I. 422; Sixtus III. 432 to 440.—Papacy still strengthening. Nestorian controversy gives it fresh opportunities of interference with East, in support of Cyril and the "orthodox" view. Council of Ephesus 431 condemns Nestorians.

Leo the Great, 440 to 461, by his character and ability secures a still stronger position for Papacy. He persuades Attila to retire and Genseric to moderate terms. Council of Chalcedon 461 condemns Eutychians.

Hilarius 461; Simplicius 468 to 483.—The Fall of Western Empire gave popes more pre-eminence in West. They repudiate claims of Constantinople to pre-eminence.

Felix III. 483 to 492.—Temporary breach of communion with East. (484 to 519.)

THEODORIC THE OSTROGOTH, 493 TO 526.

The Ostrogoths invaded Italy; defeated Odoacer and obtained nomination of Theodoric as King of Italy from Emperor of East. His rule brought comparative prosperity to Italy and saw close of schism of churches. Pope John I. went on embassy to Constantinople, but on return was imprisoned. Boethius, also imprisoned for supposed Catholic plot, writes *Consolation of Philosophy*. Theodoric arranges popes shall be elected by vote of clergy and people; but the election must be sanctioned by sovereign.

VII.

JUSTINIAN.

THE centre of interest in European History was transferred for a time, after the death of Theodoric, to Constantinople. We must therefore briefly refer to what had been going on in Eastern Europe since the death of Theodosius the Great.

It was into the Eastern branch of the Empire that the Goths originally burst. But circumstances had led them Westwards; and although the East continued to suffer from the attacks of barbarians, no new states were carved out of it. There was nothing in the East corresponding to the Visigothic kingdom in Spain, the Vandal kingdom in Africa, or the Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy. No doubt the fact that Constantinople was a *permanent* seat of Empire helps to explain the difference. Moreover, Constantinople was, by nature and art, a far more impregnable city than Rome. No barbarian force was likely to capture the capital of the East. Finally, we may notice that the races round the frontiers of the Eastern Empire were constantly fighting with one another. The Huns and other Turanian tribes were confronted by Teutons and by Slavs. These last also fought with one another. And accordingly, in spite of the general inefficiency of the Imperial Government, no barbarians were strong enough to establish an independent settlement in the Eastern Empire. The emperors were mostly incompetent rulers, dominated by women, eunuchs, or favourites,

enervated by the luxury and seclusion of Oriental sovereigns. The political history of the Empire from Theodosius to Justinian is chiefly the history of palace intrigues, following one another for more than a century, and occasionally relieved by religious superstitions or fanaticisms.

For the Church in the East was little better than the State. The bishops were generally as corrupt and unscrupulous as the courtiers. And what of energy was thrown into religion mostly took the form of disputes on metaphysical questions about the Nature of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity. Arianism, Sabellianism, Nestorianism, and Eutychianism rose in turns to distract thoughtful people by their ingenious subtleties, and to serve as useful grounds of accusation to be brought against those whom it was desired to attack. Scarcely anyone who spoke on the Incarnation or the Trinity could fail to make himself amenable to the charge of falling into one of these heresies. Pelagianism too invaded the East as well as the West; but the more practical character of the dispute about Free Will and Divine Grace seemed to make it less attractive to the Oriental mind.

The brightest episode in this dreary century, is the story of S. Chrysostom, the eloquent prelate who dared to confront the Imperial Government, and to denounce the wealthy and powerful classes of Constantinople. By the support of the common people, whose champion he was, Chrysostom was able to hold his position from A.D. 398 to 404, except for a brief interval of exile. The best of the clergy and laity rallied around him; but the struggle proved too unequal. Rival bishops, priests whose vices he had denounced, heretics, and pagans joined the court against him. The simplicity of his mode of living alienated many of the poor, who liked the

ostentation, and thought they profited by the wasteful luxury to which previous archbishops had accustomed them. Chrysostom was driven for a second time into exile, and the Church sank again into a position of dependence on the emperors, and again rivalled the corruptions of the secular world.

The Empire seemed yearly to be growing weaker. Persia was pressing on it from the East. Barbarians invaded it from the North. Its supremacy over the Western nations was becoming more and more nominal. Theodoric had thought it worth while to get the Emperor's sanction to his assuming the title of "King of Italy"; but he ruled in complete independence. And similarly the real rulers of the other Western nations were the barbarians. The Vandals still ruled Africa; the Visigoths most of Spain and south Gaul. Other Teutonic races were building up other states: the Franks in north Gaul and north-west Germany; the Burgundians in south-west Germany; the Lombards to the east of these; the Gepidae still further eastwards; while the Ostrogoths' dominion included not only Italy, but all the country up to the Danube, from its source to the eastern borders of Illyrium. Thus the Roman Empire had been pushed into a corner. Of Europe it only retained what we now call Greece, and a part of what we now call Turkey at the time when Justinian became Emperor. (A.D. 527.) Under him there came a great increase to the Empire. Italy, Africa, and Illyria were once more subject to Constantinople. But these great conquests are not the chief glories of the reign. The legislation of Justinian's statesmen, and the codification of the Roman law, were greater and more permanent achievements than the victories of his armies.

It is difficult to say how far the Emperor himself deserves

credit for either class of achievement. He is described as a vicious and cowardly man, who combined prodigality and greed, who was tenacious of his dignity, and yet married an actress and prostitute, and became a slave to her whims. It was Justinian's good fortune to be splendidly served by the greatest general and the greatest jurists of the age. But he probably possessed that supreme merit in a ruler, the capacity for discerning ability and competence; and he certainly devoted himself energetically to the work of government. So unremitting was his labour at times, that some of his subjects regarded him as a supernatural being who needed neither sleep nor food.

His wife, Theodora, was a passionate and beautiful woman, an enthusiastic fanatic, with a wild love of intrigue and excitement, sometimes cruel, sometimes beneficent, but endowed with a strength of will that enabled her to dominate the Emperor, and with an intellectual force and ability that rendered him no small assistance.

Justinian was by birth a Dacian peasant, probably of Gothic blood. His uncle, Justin, rose to the imperial throne by the support of the army, and surrendered it to his nephew at the age of seventy-seven. The new Emperor was already forty-four years of age. One of his first acts was to marry the celebrated comic actress whose beauty was famous, and whose character was notorious throughout the Empire. The law forbade such a marriage with an actress. But Justinian altered the law and made Theodora not only his wife, but also his colleague in imperial power.

Justinian's early wars were of a defensive sort. He had to protect his dominions from the Persians in the East, and the Bulgarians on the North. In the campaigns against the

former a Thracian peasant named Belisarius proved that he possessed great military ability; and on his return to Constantinople, Justinian resolved to send him to invade Africa. The Vandals seem to have lost much of their old prowess in the warm climate of Africa. Wealth and luxury had enervated the Teutonic barbarians. As Arians, allied with Donatists, they had persecuted the orthodox among their subjects. And the personal jealousies of Vandal chiefs added to the dissensions caused by religious differences. The task of Belisarius proved unexpectedly easy. At the head of a small army he landed in Africa, proclaiming that he came as a friend and liberator. The disaffected gathered around him. After a single battle he entered Carthage without opposition; and in the course of a three months' war (A.D. 533) he re-conquered the whole of the wealthy province of Africa. The Vandals now disappear from history, and their kingdom remained subject to the Empire till the coming of the Mohammedan invaders.

This complete and easy conquest, no doubt, suggested an attempt that seemed still more adventurous. The Ostrogoths in Italy, like the Vandals in Africa, ruled over an alien population, whom they had subjugated by military qualities, which had since decayed. Theodoric had died shortly before the accession of Justinian. His older policy of religious toleration had been abandoned, and in Italy, as in Africa, the orthodox Catholics would welcome an imperial invasion. When Belisarius landed he encountered, at first, even less opposition than he met with in Africa. Sicily, Naples, and Rome surrendered almost without a blow (A.D. 536). But the Ostrogoths had not, like the Vandals, completely lost their military powers. Taken by surprise, and abandoned by their

subjects in south and central Italy, they had retired to Ravenna. But having mustered to the number of 150,000 they descended on Rome in the following spring (A.D. 537); and it needed all the genius of Belisarius to save the city from their hands. He had now only 5,000 of his own veteran troops, and the native Italians were not only destitute of military experience; they were also utterly unfitted by their physique to fight on equal terms with hardy Goths. But the city had been fortified with such skill, and its defence was conducted with so much energy, that it was able to hold out till reinforcements came from Constantinople. Then the Goths were compelled to retire. Ravenna was besieged and had to surrender; and Italy, like Africa, was reunited to the empire.

But the struggle was not yet over. The successes of Belisarius had provoked the jealousy of Justinian and Theodora. At such a court as that of Constantinople there was no lack of courtiers to fan suspicions. After his earlier conquest, the victorious general had been accused of wishing to make himself independent king of Africa. On that occasion, the readiness with which he obeyed a summons to Constantinople silenced his accusers; but now a similar charge was made in relation to Italy, and his departure for the Eastern capital was speedily followed by a renewal of the struggle by the Ostrogoths. Belisarius had won the support of the Italian people. But his successors alienated them by oppression; and the Ostrogoths were now generally welcomed as liberators. Rome, however, held out till it was subdued by famine. The surrender was followed by a terrible pillage—an incident that was becoming pretty common in the story of Rome. But on this occasion the conquerors actually drove the inhabitants beyond the walls, and for forty days Rome was a deserted city.

The news of this catastrophe was followed by the re-appointment of Belisarius to the command of the imperial troops in Italy. He re-took the capital; but he was so ill-supplied with troops and necessities that he had to abandon it again to the Ostrogoths. His consummate generalship was never more conspicuous than in the disastrous struggle he sustained against overwhelming odds and difficulties. Yet when an adequate army was sent from the East, he was not allowed to command it. The eunuch Narses had the honour of again restoring Italy to the Empire; and he ruled it for fifteen years (A.D. 554-568) under the title of Exarch.

Belisarius rendered one more great service to Justinian. He saved Constantinople from an invading horde of Bulgarians and Slavs. Then he was once more disgraced. He was reduced (according to one tradition) to beg for bread in the streets. This story is of doubtful authenticity. But there is no reason to doubt that the great general who had done so much to revive the Roman Empire, and had saved its capital from destruction, died in poverty and disgrace.

We turn now to the other great branch of Justinian's work—the codification of the confused and often conflicting laws of the Empire.

Roman law (like our English Common Law) was originally based on customs, which were gradually fixed by the decisions and interpretations of judges; that is to say (in the case of Rome), of kings and consuls. Then a Code of Twelve Tables was drawn up in B.C. 250. After this the power of making fresh laws was exercised by various assemblies and magistrates of the Republic. Under the Empire the Senate became the legislative body in matters of *private* law, such as contracts and wills. But public legislation was in the hands of the emperors.

Several unsuccessful attempts to bring together all the laws into a harmonious code were made. The last of these was under Theodosius II., in A.D. 438. But the task always proved too difficult.

Apart from all secular legislation, there had been growing up a body of ecclesiastical law often trenching on secular matters. The rules of the Church were originally only enforced by penance or excommunication. Submission to these was, of course, voluntary. If a person did not mind being excommunicated, the Church could bring no force to bear upon him till Christianity became the State religion. Then, however, the civil power had stepped in to assist the ecclesiastical. It had created new offences, such as heresy; and had placed what before were only vices in the category of crimes. The State had also tried to enforce the decrees of ecclesiastical councils, and so had given the force of law to the decisions of these assemblies.

Justinian's Code aimed at correlating and reducing to order all these different elements of secular and ecclesiastical law. It begins by a statement of the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, and an anathema against the heresies of Nestorius, Eutyches, and Apollinarius. Then comes a recognition of the decrees of the four general councils, and of the primacy of Rome in matters ecclesiastical.

Laws for the clergy follow. Excommunication is restricted within certain bounds. The qualifications for a bishopric and the mode of election is defined. The clergy are not to be exempt from the ordinary laws; but they are subjected to special restraints. Thus they must not frequent gaming-tables or theatres. The bishops are to discharge certain secular duties, to inspect public accounts, and to supervise bequests left for

public purposes. Monasteries are not to be established without the consent of the bishop of the diocese. A slave who becomes a monk may be reclaimed by his master during the first three years from when he took the vows.

These and similar regulations remind us how completely the Church had now become interwoven with the national life, and also what sort of an ecclesiastical supremacy was asserted by the emperors. The fact that Justinian's laws provoked no particular outcry seems to indicate that the imperial claims were acquiesced in by the Church.

Turning next to secular matters, we will first notice that Christian sentiment had not yet produced much effect on civil law. In the main the secular parts of Justinian's legislation resemble in principle the old heathen Roman laws.

Slavery is fully recognized, whether the slave is so by capture, or birth, or by his own voluntary act. He is the property of his master. He may be sold, and he cannot contract a legal marriage; nor may he bear witness against his master except in cases of treason. On the other hand, the Code makes it a crime for a master to kill a slave maliciously, and even, in some cases, to intend to do so. This was substantially the principle of the old law; but what slight modifications were introduced were in the direction of humanity.

Marriage is treated as a merely civil contract, independent of the ecclesiastical sanction or benediction. But marriages of Christians with Jews, and of godparents with godchildren are forbidden. Divorce is allowed in many cases. Christianity had, however, done something to introduce stricter views as to the marriage bond. Under the older laws it is scarcely too much to say that either party could dissolve the connection almost at pleasure. Even under Justinian's Code there is

much freedom. A husband, for instance, could get a divorce on the ground that his wife had attended circuses or theatres without his permission. A wife could claim a divorce if the husband had been convicted of any one of a considerable list of crimes. An inferior and less binding kind of marriage or concubinage was recognized by the law, and seems to have been not rarely adopted by the clergy. On the other hand, efforts were made to put down the barbarous practice of infanticide, which had been almost unchecked by the old law of Rome. The State now undertook to make provision for the children of parents who were too poor to bring up their families.

Under the law of *property* the only important changes had relation to ecclesiastical property, which might not be alienated except for the redemption of captives. This sanctity of ecclesiastical property led in time to a great enrichment of the Church. In ages of violence the Church alone among proprietors was frequently receiving and never giving up, and was not affected by forfeitures or confiscations.

The *punishments* authorized in Justinian's laws were not on the whole severe, except in the case of slaves. Torture was, however, allowed in some cases. Heretics, Pagans, and Jews were disqualified from holding civil offices, or any but the lowest position in the army.

These brief notes on Justinian's laws are intended to throw light on some of the feelings and habits of the age. They give, of course, no idea of the tremendous work that this Codification involved.

HISTORIC SUMMARY OF CHAPTER VII.

Justinian reigned from 527 to 565.—Africa, Illyria, and Italy again subject to Constantinople, chiefly by generalship of Belisarius and decay of Ostrogoths and Vandals. In this reign the laws of State and Church were collected into a Code which was the basis of much of later law in many parts of Europe. It recognizes slavery, and only adds to old mitigations. It treats marriage as a purely civil contract, and allows divorce in many cases. Infanticide to be sternly punished; the State to bring up children of very poor. There are considerable religious disabilities.

In 554 Italy was placed under an Exarch (Narses) whose capital was Ravenna.

VIII.

GREGORY THE GREAT.

THE emperors did not long retain their restored dominion over Italy. Within three years of Justinian's death there was a fresh barbarian invasion, which resulted in the loss of by far the larger part of the Peninsula. The new conquerors were the Lombards, a race of Germans who seem to have been rather prominent in the second century, but who then vanish from history till the fifth. By this time they had descended south and east to the northern shores of the Danube, and were fighting hard with Slavonic and Teutonic neighbours. The emperors seem to have generally been on friendly terms with these Lombards, and to have used them against the older barbarian enemies. At length, however, in 568 the Lombards burst into Italy, as the Visigoths, Huns, and Ostrogoths in turns had done before them. They are said to have been invited by Narses, the representative of imperial power, in revenge for the way he was being treated by the court of Constantinople. At any rate, there was little resistance. The people of Italy were tired of their orthodox rulers, who treated them worse than the Arian Ostrogoths had done. The latter had generally tolerated the Catholic Church, and allowed it considerable independence. But the emperor and his agents tried to reduce the pope and the Italian bishops to the sort of

subservience that was usual in the East. They interfered in matters of patronage, and promoted unworthy favourites. They compelled popes to accept decrees of Oriental councils; and they accompanied ecclesiastical interferences, with secular oppressions. Accordingly the people were at first little disposed to resist the Lombards; and indeed military powers had so decayed in Italy that in any case they would probably have quietly submitted to a change of masters. Yet the Lombard invasion seems to have been one of exceptional ferocity. If we may believe contemporary writers, the cruelties and destructions, not only of Goths, but even of Huns and Vandals, were now surpassed. The Lombards professed Arian Christianity. But they showed no respect for churches or sanctuaries. Men's hearts trembled with fear, and there was a widespread belief that the end of the world was at hand.

At this crisis the pope died, and his place was filled by a man who may be described as the true organizer of the Mediæval Papacy, and of its handmaid Mediæval Monasticism. Gregory was born about 540 A.D., ten years after the foundation of the Benedictine Order. (See page 63.) His mother and two of his aunts are included in the Calendar of Saints. He grew up amid religious surroundings. But he had also a good secular education, so that "in grammar, rhetoric, and logic he was second to none in Rome."¹ While still young he distinguished himself in the Senate, which since the fall of the Western Empire had again exercised important functions at Rome. He was appointed to the prætorship, the highest secular office in the city, for the Exarch, or representative of the emperor,

¹ Barmby's *Gregory the Great*, from which also the later quotations in this chapter are taken.

made Ravenna his capital. While engaged in political duties Gregory's first care was for religion, and he soon found a life in the world too secular for his aspirations. He spent most of his wealth in founding monasteries; and at length, having entered one himself, he tried to escape all worldly cares. But the Church could not spare a man of such ability. Two different popes sent him on their business to Constantinople, where he lived for some years, enlarging his experience of the world and of statesmanship, learning lessons of what to avoid and what to pursue.

Pope Pelagius died in 590 A.D. Gregory had by this time returned to Rome, and become abbot of his monastery. He desired nothing more than to be left to the solitary, ascetic life of a monk, with time for fervent spiritual exercises and rigorous self-discipline. But the times demanded a strong pope. The Lombards had now subdued three quarters of Italy. A strip of country running from Rome to Ravenna still acknowledged the Exarch. So too did some smaller districts, including Venice, Naples, and the toe of the Peninsula. But even these were frequently invaded, and received little help from imperial troops. At Rome the popes were virtually the rulers; and everyone seems to have agreed that only Gregory was capable of saving the city at this crisis. He was accordingly elected against his will. He wrote to the emperor, begging that the election might not be confirmed. He even fled from Rome to escape the Papal dignity. But it was all in vain. He was pursued and brought back, and finally installed in the seat of S. Peter.

There seems no reason to doubt the genuineness of his reluctance. "I have advanced outwardly," he wrote to one of his friends, "but inwardly I have fallen;" and to another,

"Under the colour of the episcopate, I have been brought back into the world. I am enslaved to greater earthly cares than I ever remember to have been subjected to as a layman." He remained to the end a monk at heart. But he set himself to fulfil the duties of his position with the energy he would fain have directed to his own personal sanctification, and with an ability which entitles him to rank among great statesmen and rulers.

The immediate danger from the Lombards was removed by a truce which lasted four years. This gave Gregory time to reform the organization of the Church and city over which he ruled, and to extend the authority of the Papacy over the Churches of Africa, Gaul, and Spain.

The Visigothic King of Spain had renounced Arianism in the year before Gregory's accession; and it fell to Gregory to supervise the transition to the orthodox communion. In Gaul the Franks were establishing their dominion, and the Franks (unlike most of the German tribes) had been originally "converted" to the Catholic form of Christianity. But the conversion was somewhat superficial. Gregory fought a hard fight against simony and other abuses of the Gallic Church; and in trying to get his way, he often addressed the Frank kings in language of adulation which he must have known they were far from deserving. Such adulation was only too common in his dealings with rulers, and especially with the emperors; and he was far from always attaining the ends which he pursued by such unworthy means. Thus his efforts to reform the churches of Gaul only met with a very partial success. But at least he got the Papal authority nominally accepted by them. The metropolitan, the Bishop of Arles, received his *pallium* from the Pope.

In Africa we find Gregory reviving the persecution of the Donatists, who were still holding out, and who had even formed friendly relations with their Catholic rivals. But Gregory was not the man to tolerate any truce with schismatics, except under the strongest necessity. It has to be remembered that in the confusions of those ages of violence, the strength and unity of the Catholic Church seemed more essential than ever to the progress of civilization; and that toleration was in those days seldom based on anything better than goodnature and a lack of zeal. At any rate Gregory was not a tolerant man, though he was sometimes ready to temporize with heretics, with a view to their ultimate conversion.

So it was with the Lombards. When fighting was resumed between them and the imperial forces, Gregory practically threw off his allegiance to the Emperor, and opened negotiations with the invaders. The Queen of the Lombards happened to be a Catholic; and Gregory kept up a steady correspondence with this powerful lady. He personally directed the military operations and the preparations for defence. He roused his people by devotional and evangelistic services, and strengthened them by penitential discipline. He authorized the bishops to sell or pledge their sacred vessels for the relief of the sufferers from the war. Ultimately he succeeded in getting rid of both the Imperial and Lombard armies; and his triumph was crowned by the conversion of the terrible barbarians from Arianism to Catholicism. (599.)

In the course of these busy years Gregory found time to despatch Augustine on the celebrated mission which began the conversion of the English to Christianity. (597.) He also entered on his long controversy with the patriarch of Constan-

tinople, who had claimed some degree of supremacy over the whole Christian Church. But perhaps the work of internal reform occupied a larger part of his energies than any of these external affairs. The subject of Monasticism seemed always present to him. He wished the monks to seclude themselves as far as possible, not only from secular, but even from ecclesiastical business. Hence he preferred them to be laymen, and objected to their undertaking pastoral responsibilities. He laboured incessantly to raise and maintain the moral and spiritual standard of the monasteries. He also exercised a stern discipline over his clergy, trying to put down gluttony, backbiting, and frivolous conversation, as well as more serious offences. He set them an example of constant activity in well-doing, finding time for philanthropic work, even when he was most hardly pressed by business of Church and State. His voluminous writings prove how multifarious his interests were, how strong his grasp of principles and details, how high his standard for the pastoral office. He also paid great attention to liturgical matters, and the phrase "Gregorian Chants" reminds us of his interest in Church music.

In theology Gregory showed little originality. Like most of the greatest popes, he was content to receive the established doctrines, and to defend them against all opponents. He accepted in the main the teaching of the great African, Augustine, but his interest in it was practical rather than intellectual. His works indicate the stage of doctrinal development which Catholicism had reached in his day. He did much to fix this in the Church, but little to advance it; and his chief claim to be included among those who have greatly influenced history, must be founded on the success with which he extended the power of the Papacy, its temporal supremacy at

Rome, and its spiritual supremacy over all the churches of Western Europe.

This was of course greatly assisted by the conversions from Arianism that were going on in his time. We have seen how Arianism, though rejected by both the Eastern and Western Empires, was originally accepted by most of the German invaders: by the Visigoths, who now ruled in Spain; by the Vandals and Ostrogoths, who had recently ruled in Africa and Italy; by the Lombards, the Burgundians, and many others. It looked for a time as if the doctrines which were thus accepted by the most vigorous of the European races were likely to triumph in the Christian Church. But the sixth century brought a change. It saw the conversion of Lombards, Burgundians, and Visigoths; the overthrow of Ostrogoths and Vandals; the rise to power of the Catholic Franks. It is not possible to attribute any of these movements, save the Lombard conversion, to Gregory himself. But they contributed to the work he was doing, to the building up of mediæval Catholicism in the form that made it so important a factor in the history of Europe.

The Lombard authority in Italy lasted from 568 to 774 A.D.; but it was never so complete as that which other Germans established in Britain, Gaul, and Spain. The conquerors found themselves confronted with a higher civilization than had existed in the more outlying parts of the Empire. Accordingly we are not surprised to find that the Lombards quickly adopted Italian customs, and that as soon as they accepted Catholicism they were energetic in building churches and founding monasteries. In their work we see the beginnings of Gothic art, the most characteristic art of Catholicism and the Middle Ages. Even the rude early work of the Lombard sculptors

was full of vigour and meaning. They found themselves in the midst of the creations of Byzantine art—stately, monotonous, and conventional. They infused into it some of their own energy and humour. It was in Lombard carvings that the rude thoughts of the northern barbarians first found artistic expression. They claimed for religion every department of Nature and Life—beasts and birds with their varied expressions; heroes of classic myth; traditions of sun worship. They included the grotesque in their sacred architecture; and they added to all these a symbolism by which they hinted at the things which cannot be represented in stone or metal. From the movement which now began we can definitely trace the development of the later Italian architecture, sculpture, and painting. The Lombard artists had, properly speaking, no predecessors. The old forms of art were simply dying away, and the Lombards were the founders of the new.

Among the institutions of this remarkable race we find also some of the first traces of what was afterwards known as Feudalism. They established a territorial aristocracy, whom the Latins called *duces*, and who were bound to follow their king in war and to provide troops in return for the lands they held, and over which they ruled with at least a considerable measure of independence. We shall see that this became an essential feature of Feudalism.

Of Gregory it only remains to say that he lived till 504 A.D., and retained to the last the practical dominion of Rome and the surrounding district, as well as the primacy of the West. The success of his life's work was perhaps best seen in the fact that his unworthy successors did not lose the authority he had acquired.

HISTORIC SUMMARY OF CHAPTER VIII.

The Lombards, after much fighting with Gepidae, &c., invade Italy (567), and conquer most of it.

Gregory the Great, high-born and wealthy ; then a Roman monk of distinguished austerity ; elected Pope in 590, and is practically ruler of Rome ; English converted from heathenism, Lombards from Arianism (so too Burgundians and Spanish Visigoths, but these not by him). He carries further authority of Papacy ; reforms discipline and encourages monasticism. Dies 604.

Gothic art begins with Lombards ; and there are germs of Feudalism in the Lombard territorial arrangements. 4

IX.

MOHAMMED.

OUR attention is now called away from Europe to a country which had as yet played little part in the world's history.

Arabia lies near the confines of the three continents known to the ancients. It is almost like an island. For three of its sides are washed by the sea ; while on the fourth, a desert cuts it off from the rest of the world. Its people claimed to be descended from Ishmael. They dwelt in tents on the edge of the central desert. They fed on the simplest food, and carried on such commerce as they had by means of camels.

The Bible has occasional references to these children of the desert. It tells us, for instance, how the Queen of Sheba (Saba), came to visit Solomon. But, in the main, the history of the Arabs had been as yet a blank. Great Empires reached their country in turn. The Greek, the Roman, and the Persian came thus far, but could not include Arabia in their dominions. The deserts, or the bravery of the people, or their poverty, saved them from annexation. Fortune, too, seems to have favoured them. Alexander the Great was just about to invade Arabia when death overtook him. And so, at later times, the wandering tribes appeared likely, more than once, to lose their independence. But the danger passed away through some change of circumstance. They seemed destined to stand

outside the main currents of the world's history, till suddenly, in the 7th century, they rushed into prominence and carried their conquests and their newly-adopted religion to India on the East, and to the Atlantic on the West. It even seemed, for a time, as if they were likely to dominate the whole of the civilized world.

Before the days of Mohammed, the religion of the Arabs was full of superstitions and idolatries. Theoretically, they seem to have believed in one God (Allah), the Creator of heaven and earth. But in practice they worshipped sun, moon, and stars, idols and sacred stones. Angels and jinns (or, as we should say, demons) peopled their imaginations; and pilgrimages played an important part in their lives. Mecca was the chief centre of attraction. For there was kept the White Stone, reputed to have fallen from heaven in the time of Adam. It was embedded in a wall of a cubic building, known as the Kaaba, which was supposed to have been built by Seth, and rebuilt by Ishmael, the father of the race.

The custody of the Kaaba was entrusted to the family of the Kossai, who professed to be able to trace their descent through Ishmael up to Adam himself. Mohammed belonged to this great family. He was the tenth son of its chief, who died before the future prophet was born. The boy spent the first five years of his life altogether in the mountains; and though he afterwards often visited Mecca, the greater part of his later childhood also seems to have been spent in bracing solitudes. Then he travelled with his uncle guardian (Abu Talib) to Syria and other places, saw something of Jews and Eastern Christians, and had plenty of leisure to meditate on whatever he had seen or heard. For his work alternated from that of a camel driver to that of a shepherd; and both

occupations were favourable to reflection, if the person who followed them was of a reflective turn.

At the age of twenty-five (A.D. 594) Mohammed married the rich widow Kadija, who had already passed her fortieth year. The middle-aged wife believed in her young husband when all other people regarded him as an impostor, and he repaid her with the rich stores of an affection such as is rare indeed in polygamous lands.

In the years that followed his marriage Mohammed continued to indulge his love of solitary thought. Neither his newly-acquired wealth nor his domestic interests could divert him from his religious meditations. He would often retire for whole days to a cave, which looked out only on to bleak rocks and sandy plains. Trances and ecstasies became common incidents in his life; or he would pour out rhapsodies, some of which have since been embodied in the Koran, and of which the recurrent burden is the greatness of God and the pettiness of man.

So passed fifteen years. The shepherd boy had become middle-aged before he entered on his career as a reformer and leader of men. He went through many wrestlings of soul. He heard voices saying, "Hail, messenger of Allah!" He studied Judaism and Christianity, as well as they could be studied by a man who knew not how to read or write, and who only came across bad and superstitious specimens of either religion. At length, when he was about forty, he saw the Archangel Gabriel in a vision, and received the commission to speak in Allah's name. At first it was far from clear to him what he was to say and how; but he was upheld by his wife's faith, and by the assurances of one Waraka, "the Simeon of Islam," an old man who had been long looking for a religious

reformation, and who now recognized that the time had come—and the man.

As for the prophet's guardian, Abu Talib, he was not prepared to change his own religion; but he not only promised to protect his nephew, he also confided to him his own son Ali, who afterwards became a Caliph, a word which means, etymologically, "Follower" (of the Prophet), and practically a ruler among Mohammedans.

Now began the movement destined to spread over so large a part of the world. With only three disciples (an old man, an oldish woman, and a young lad) Mohammed began to denounce those idols in whom his countrymen believed, and from whose worship came the prosperity of his Meccan townsfolk and the special glory of his own family. The movement aimed at being a Social as well as a Religious Revolution. The prevailing vices of drunkenness, gambling, and infanticide were attacked. Slavery and polygamy were to be regulated, though not abolished.

It is a melancholy fact that Mohammed afterwards broke through his own restrictions on polygamy. But we must make allowance for the temptations of a man who attained so much power, and was surrounded by so much adulation. Besides the authority of an Eastern despot, he secured the spiritual autocracy of a man regarded by thousands as almost divine. We cannot wonder that he sometimes acted as if he was not bound by the ordinary obligations of ordinary men. The wonderful thing is that his head was *so little* turned, that he conquered most of the temptations of his position, that he maintained to the last a rigid simplicity in his mode of life, that he steadily repudiated the idea that he was more than man, that he had worked miracles, or that he was infallible. Early in his career, when trying to win over some powerful

person, he was addressed by a blind beggar, and frowned at the interruption. This incident he introduced into the Koran to illustrate his own fallibility. He promoted the blind beggar, and always greeted him respectfully, saying, "The man is thrice welcome on whose account my Lord has rebuked me."

It was only very gradually that the camel driver rose to be a great ruler, and the head of a great religious body. After three years' preaching he had only fourteen disciples; and when his powerful uncle died, he only saved his life by flying from Mecca. His sole companion was Abu Bekr, whom Mohammedans therefore call "the other of the two." The fugitives are said to have escaped capture by the fact that a spider had woven his web across the entrance of a cave where they were hidden. At any rate they reached Medina in safety. This was in A.D. 622, which thenceforth became the Hegira—the beginning of years in the Mohammedan Calendar.

The new faith now began to grow. The people of Medina did not start, like those of Mecca, with a strong local prejudice against it. It did not threaten the source of their town's prosperity. Disciples quickly multiplied, and invested their leader with secular as well as spiritual authority. They soon began to spread the religion, Islam, by the sword. At first the fighting may have been in self-defence; but it soon became a means of proselytizing, or even a mere way of acquiring booty and slaves for the faithful. Nevertheless the religious idea remained so dominant, that a conquered tribe or people had only to accept Islam, in order to be admitted to a full equality with their conquerors. If they would not be converted, their choice lay between paying tribute or being put to the sword.

To say that a religion is spread by force, evidently does not

go to the root of the matter. We have still to ask, "Whence came the force?" Mohammed started in Medina as a stranger and a fugitive. When he was strong enough to draw the sword, swords were also drawn against him. He had his share of defeats as well as of victories; and if he gradually subdued all Arabia, it was mainly because Islam represented an advance in social and individual morality, and so attracted the best and bravest of the Arabs, and became to them a source of enthusiasm and discipline, of courage and faith. Religions generally make way in consequence of what is good in them rather than in consequence of what is bad. The standard of Islam was, in some respects, deplorably low; and its followers were far from living up to its standard. Nevertheless it was in advance not only of the surrounding idolatries, but even of the degraded forms of Christianity with which it was soon to come into contact.

At this point the prophet died. He lived to re-enter Mecca in triumph, and to see his authority recognized throughout the land of his birth; but it was left to his followers, the Caliphs, to carry the crescent far beyond the borders of Arabia.

Mohammed is one of the few men of whom it may be said with some confidence, that had he never lived the course of the world's history would have been very different. Napoleon gained greater victories, but his conquests were comparatively transitory. We should have had Protestantism without Luther, and America without Columbus; but there is no reason to think that anything corresponding to Islam would have come without Mohammed. The whole of its sacred books, unlike those of the other great religions, are the composition of a single man, and he one who in all probability could neither read nor write. There is a sense

no doubt in which Islam is the least original of religions. Much of it is borrowed from Judaism; not a little from Christianity. Its theologic basis—the belief in an unseen Helper, the doing of whose will is the one thing worth living for, and who overrules all things—is the common possession of earnest men of most religions. Its fatalistic form is common to many. Its “four duties,” pilgrimage, prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, its doctrine of rewards and punishments in the future world, and many of its other features, are taken over from other religions. In fact, Mohammed always claimed to be teaching, not new things, but old. He claimed to be re-asserting what Moses and Jesus and other prophets had previously revealed. His triumph was that he so impressed these beliefs and his own personality upon numbers of disciples, that they were ready to apply them to their daily lives, and to fight and die for Islam, in sure and certain hope of the promised rewards.*

Carlyle has well written of the Koran, “It is the confused ferment of a great, rude, human soul; rude, untutored, that cannot even read; but fervent, earnest, struggling vehemently to utter itself in words. With a kind of breathless intensity he strives to utter himself; the thoughts crowd on him pell-mell; for very multitude of things to say he can get nothing said. . . . In the haste and pressure of continual fighting has not time to mature himself into fit speech. The panting, breathless haste and vehemence of a man struggling in the thick of battle for life and salvation; this is the mood he is in! A headlong haste; for very magnitude of meaning he cannot get himself articulated into words. The successive

* We have to avoid the extreme views of ignoring the sensual elements of these, or of regarding them as merely sensual.

utterances of a soul in that mood, coloured by the various vicissitudes of three-and-twenty years; now well uttered, now worse. This is the Koran." Such as it is, with its faults and its merits, it is the Bible of the hundred and sixty millions who follow Mohammed to-day, and has been the Bible of still more millions in the twelve intervening centuries. It claims absolute infallibility as a regulator of men's daily lives, as the basis of law and religion and practice. It is full of repetitions and absurdities, and things which we can scarcely imagine to be of interest to any human soul. But it also contains passages of high moral elevation, as where it says, "A man's true wealth hereafter is the good he has done, in this world, to his fellowmen. When he dies *people* will ask what property he has left behind him. But the *angels* will ask what good deeds he has sent before him."

We shall have, in our next chapter, to speak of the extraordinary triumphs of Islam in the century that followed the death of its founder. It may, therefore, be well to call attention here to some of the strong and weak points of the new religion.

The intense belief in one God distinguishes it not only from Buddhism and Brahminism and idolatries of various sort; but even in a certain sense from the Christianity with which it was now to come into contact. The discussions about the Trinity, so prevalent in the Eastern Church, had not only confused the minds of the unlearned as to the divine unity; but had also led them to think of God as a Being to be argued about, rather than as an actually present Person, whose will is discoverable by earnest souls, and must at all costs be obeyed. This is the very essence of "Islam." The word is derived from the *Salama*, which means indifferently, to be free, to be safe, or to be devoted to God. Freedom, salvation, and

obedience to the divine will become identified in Islam as indeed in all true religion. But the Eastern Christians were so absorbed in discussions about God, that they had, most of them, pretty much given up really believing in Him. In the West, meanwhile, ceremonialism, sacramentalism, and sacerdotalism were similarly tending to obscure the faith to which they were set up to bear witness. Islam on the contrary had little room for theological discussion, and none for sacramentalism or sacerdotalism. In the long run it may fairly be questioned whether this was not a loss rather than a gain. But in its earlier struggles with forms of Christianity in which these things were frequently superstitions (forms that remained when the spirit of them had departed), the absorption of Mohammedans in a single great doctrine was probably a source of strength.

Of the *fatalism* of Islam it must suffice to say, that while theoretically a belief in predestination might seem almost fatal to human energy and initiative, history proves that fatalists do not practically accept the logic which connects passive acquiescence with their creed. Cromwell's Ironsides might have found it hard to answer a caviller who asked what was the use of their drill and discipline, since if God willed that they should be victorious, they would be so equally whether they prepared themselves or not. But practically the conviction that they were "elect" led them to act with increased energy, and sustained them through difficulties and drudgery. So too in the case of the Saracens; whatever theoretical or practical objection be taken to their fatalism, it plainly stimulated their will force, and helped them to spread their conquests to India on one side, and to Spain on the other.

In its political aspects, Mohammedanism tends to despotism. The autocracy of Allah is reflected in the temporal despotism of Caliph, Sultan, or Shah. The absence of priesthood, and of all hereditary nobility, further contributed to the unchecked power of rulers. Now experience seems to show that despotism is in the long run pernicious; but that in its earlier stages it often promotes military efficiency, and is favourable to unity and organization. The Saracens were in many respects a good natural material. The air of their desert is of an invigorating sort, even when it is unpleasantly hot. They had lived for generations the healthy open-air life of shepherds and camel-drivers with a simple diet, and without the luxuries that were enervating the barbarians who had settled within the old Empire as well as its older inhabitants. On the other hand the Arabs had the weakness of nomads till the new faith raised them above their natural impulses, and disciplined them for the work of conquest. When we add that in most of the lands they invaded the masses of the people were ill-disposed to their rulers, who were in most cases strangers, whose authority rested on force, we have perhaps said enough to make the Saracen conquests, of which we must speak next, not altogether unaccountable.

HISTORIC SUMMARY OF CHAPTER IX.

Mohammed, born A.D. 571, was an Arab camel-driver and shepherd, belonging to the family who had charge of the Kaaba at Mecca. At 25 he marries Kadija, a rich widow of 40. His career as prophet begins A.D. 610. After the death of his uncle Abu Talib in 620, he is not safe in Mecca. He flies to Medina in 622. This begins the Mohammedan era. He captures Mecca in 630, and has subdued all Arabia by 632 when he dies.

The *Koran* is a collection of the prophet's sayings, put together after his death from MSS. and memory.

X.

THE SARACEN CONQUESTS.

WHEN Mohammed died it might well have been doubted whether his followers would keep together. The Arab nomads had never shown much capacity for cohesion. The prophet had left no son to inherit his great position, and there were three or four men whose claims to rule appeared pretty equal. There was Ali, the prophet's cousin, who had been to him almost as a son, and who had married Fatima, his one surviving daughter. There was Abu Bekr, "the other of the two," the man who had been with Mohammed in the cave. He was the father of Ayesha, who had been the favourite wife of the prophet since the death of Kadija. Then too there was Omar, the greatest of Islam's generals, who had led the faithful again and again to victory. And there was Othman, the widower of two of the prophet's daughters.

Omar, however, supported the claims of Abu Bekr, and there was at first no opposition. The "other of the two" became first Caliph, *i.e.*, first successor of the prophet. Abu seems to have found it no easy task to prevent the unity of Islam from being broken. Various tribes tried to assert their independence. But Abu, though usually of a mild and gentle nature, showed great firmness and severity in dealing with these rebels. Many of them were put to death, and the rest acknowledged the Caliph's authority. In this reign the Koran

was put together from scattered fragments of the prophet's sayings, some of which had been committed to manuscript, and others preserved in the memory of disciples.

Abu only survived Mohammed two years. He was succeeded in turns by Omar, Othman, and Ali. Under these three old companions of the Prophet, Islam extended its borders over Syria, Persia, and Egypt. In fact, these three large states were conquered within twenty years of Mohammed's death. The four first Caliphs seem all to have been men of high character and fervent zeal, who devoted themselves wholly to the duties of their high station, and had their reward in the visible spread of their religion and their dominions.

Syria was the first to fall. It had mostly belonged to the Roman Empire ever since the Empire was established.¹ But it had never assimilated either Greek or Roman civilization. The armies of the Emperor were now defeated by the Saracens,² and the inhabitants seem to have readily transferred their allegiance to the conquerors. Damascus fell in 635, Jerusalem in 636; and the whole of Syria had yielded to the invaders by A.D. 639.

Meanwhile the Persian Empire was suffering even more fatal blows than those thus inflicted on the Roman. The fighting here began earlier and lasted longer. At first the elephants and other advantages of the wealthier and more civilized Persians gave them an advantage over the Arab invaders; but the terrible battles of 642 and 643 decided the fate of Persia.

Egypt was overrun almost at the same time. Alexandria,

¹ It was conquered by Pompey about B.C. 64.

² The word "Saracen" is said to mean "Oriental," and to have been first applied to the Arabs by their Western neighbours. It afterwards came to be applied to all the followers of Islam.

the second city of the Empire, long the intellectual capital of the world, yielded to the Saracens in 641; and soon another wealthy province had been altogether detached from the Empire.

These amazing conquests naturally brought immense spoil to the victors. And there seems no doubt that power, license, and wealth produced some moral deterioration. The restrictions which Mohammed had placed on the number of wives and concubines his followers might have were now openly infringed, and the unity of Islam was soon to be broken. The fourth Caliph, Ali, never seems to have sincerely acquiesced in the choice of his predecessors. He considered that he ought to have been first Caliph; and his followers gradually formed a sect, who regarded the first three Caliphs as usurpers and interlopers. Accordingly the orthodox party were disposed to resent the authority of Ali, even when he had been properly elected by the faithful. Civil wars broke out. Ali was killed; and after much further fighting and intriguing a man named Moawia succeeded in establishing a *hereditary* Caliphate. His dynasty, known as the Ommiades, reigned for nearly a century (661 to 750 A.D.). They made Damascus their capital; and this transfer typifies the passage of the Caliphate from Arab simplicity to Syrian luxury. Nevertheless the Saracen conquests continued. They soon included all the North of Africa; and from 670 to 678 an annual attack on Constantinople was made. The country round the capital was annually ravaged; but the city itself proved too strong for the Saracens, as it had done for so many invading forces.

Moawia's death, in 676, was followed by fresh civil wars. The sect who had supported Ali, generally known as the Shias, supported Ali's son, Hosein, against the son of Moawia. The

attempt failed, but the death of Hosein became to the Shias almost what the crucifixion is to Christians. It is celebrated every year by a ten days' mourning, and by a kind of miracle play, which the audience are said to regard as a sort of actual martyrdom of their heroic leader. The Persians perpetuate the Shia schism to the present time.

Hosein was by no means the only pretender to the Caliphate, and the consequent civil wars lasted till 696, when the authority of Abdel Melik was for a time recognized by all the Moham-medans. The arts of peace now began to flourish at Damascus. Moslem poets begin to appear; the Caliphs start a currency of their own; and above all the mosques built in the reign of the next Caliph (Walid) were of extraordinary magnificence. At Cairo, Jerusalem, Damascus, Mecca, and other places, Walid either built splendid mosques, or embellished old ones, or converted Christian churches into edifices suited for Islam worship. The "Saracenic" architecture, which is founded on a combination of the Greek and Persian styles, may be considered as beginning with Walid's mosque at Damascus.

Meanwhile Walid's generals were pushing forward in all directions. One of them penetrated India, another carried the faith of Islam into Europe. Spoil and women flowed in on Damascus from many quarters; but the conquest of Spain is the one which chiefly interests us.

Spain was at this time still under the Visigoths. A man named Roderick had usurped the throne in 708. A fugitive enlisted the support of the Saracens, and a series of expeditions from Africa followed. One of these, led by the Moslem Tarik, defeated and slew Roderick in 711. Then Musa, the Moslem ruler of North Africa, crossed over in person, and formed the bold plan of cutting his way back to Damascus along the

north coast of the Mediterranean, subjugating the most civilized portions of Europe. But Tarik and Musa were now both recalled by the Caliph, and their startling scheme had to be abandoned. Walid died in 715, and his successor, Soliman, made a very determined attack on Constantinople both by sea and by land. Meanwhile the Saracens were ruling over Spain with unaccustomed wisdom and moderation. They tolerated Christianity, and respected the existing laws. Then, having consolidated their dominion, they crossed the Pyrenees in 721, and after some alternations of defeat and victory, they swept over much of Gaul along the valleys of Rhone, Loire, and Rhine. The danger to Christendom never seemed more terrible. But the great Frank Charles—henceforth known as the Hammer—hurried to the support of his southern kinsfolk, and in the great battle of Tours (A.D. 732) rolled back the tide of Mohammedan aggression. In the east of Europe too the immediate danger had passed away. The attack on Constantinople was repulsed in 717; and though the Empire was again and again invaded, the internal disputes of the Caliphate prevented the invasions from being very formidable. At length, in 750, the pretender Abbas gained a great victory on the banks of the river Teb over the last of the Ommiades dynasty. The Caliphate passed to the family of the Abbassides, who transferred their head-quarters to Bagdad. But a member of the defeated family secured the allegiance of Spain and North Africa, and established a new and rival Caliphate at Cordova, in Spain.

The history of the Moors in Spain is perhaps the brightest page in the story of Saracen conquest. "For nearly eight centuries, under her Mohammedan conquerors, Spain set to all Europe a shining example of a civilized and enlightened

State. Her fertile provinces, rendered doubly prolific by the industry and engineering skill of her conquerors, bore fruit an hundredfold. . . . Art, literature, and science prospered, as they then prospered nowhere else in Europe. Students flocked from France and Germany and England to drink from the fountain of learning, which flowed only in the cities of the Moors. . . . Women were encouraged to devote themselves to serious study. Mathematics, astronomy and botany, history, philosophy, and jurisprudence, were to be mastered in Spain, and Spain alone. The practical work of the field, the scientific methods of irrigation, the arts of fortification and shipbuilding, the highest and most elaborate products of the loom, the graver and the hammer, the potter's wheel and the mason's trowel, were brought to perfection by the Spanish Moors. In the practice of war, no less than in the arts of peace, they long stood supreme. . . . Whatsoever makes a nation great and prosperous, whatsoever tends to refinement and civilization, was found in Moslem Spain."¹

While the Western Saracens were entering on the period referred to in this quotation, the Eastern Caliphate was also enjoying considerable prosperity. The dynasty of the Abbasides lasted for five centuries. Their capital Bagdad was founded in 762, and soon far surpassed the Damascus of the Ommiades in luxury and wealth. This was specially the case in the reign of Harun al Rashid, which lasted from 786 to 809. The emperors now paid tribute to the Caliph. His chief ministers were the family of the Barmecides, and it is to their efforts we must chiefly attribute the literary, artistic, and scientific eminence of Bagdad. But at length their Caliph got

¹ From Stanley Lane-Poole's *Moors in Spain*. But he should have said *seven* centuries, not eight.

suspicious of them, and in true Oriental fashion ordered a general massacre of the family (803). After this Bagdad's glory somewhat declined. But to trace its history further would be to take us beyond the title of the present chapter. The story of the Saracen conquests practically closes in the eighth century.

HISTORIC SUMMARY OF CHAPTER X.

The Early Caliphs (Followers) and their Conquests :

Abu Bekr	elected	632.	Conquest of Syria	632 to 638.
Omar I.	"	634.	"	Persia 636 to 651.
Othman	"	644.	"	Egypt 639 to 641.
Ali	"	651.	"	"Africa" 647 to 709.
Hassan	"	661.		

The Ommiades and their wars, 661 to 750.

Moawia I. established a hereditary dynasty at Damascus, and attacked Constantinople yearly from 670 to 678.

[Schism of Sonnites (orthodox) and Shias (sectaries). Shias specially in Persia. The death of Hosein becomes their great festival.]

Vezid 680; Moawia II. 683; Meiwani 684; Abdel Melik 685. After much civil war the opponents of Ommiades are suppressed, and there is a great development of luxury, literature, &c.

Walid I. 705. The Saracens cross into Spain and conquer it 711 to 713.

The Abbassides displace the Ommiades in 750, and transfer capital to Bagdad in 762. But a rival Caliphate is established at Cordova in 756.

XI.

FRANKS AND ENGLISH.

IN our last chapter we showed how the tide of Mohammedan Conquest was turned back in the West by the victory of Charles the Hammer over those Saracens who had already conquered Spain, and were overrunning a large part of Gaul. We must now turn back to explain who this Charles Martel was; for the race to which he belonged was now to be for a time the most important race in Europe.

The Franks had hitherto played a less prominent part in the invasion to the Empire than the Goths, the Vandals, the Lombards, and others of the same Germanic race. Nevertheless, we read of Franks ravaging the North of Gaul as early as 240 A.D. They were one of the purest Teutonic races, belonging to its Low German branch. At the beginning of the fifth century they were settled about the mouths of the Rhine, and in the country we now call Belgium. They had sometimes fought in defence of the Empire; but they now began their career of conquest, and were soon the chief rivals of the Visigoths for the foremost place in Western Europe. Religious differences embittered the rivalry between the two races. For at first the Franks were heathen; and when they adopted Christianity it was in the Catholic form. But the Visigoths as yet were staunch Arians, hating the orthodox as intensely as they hated the heathen.

The first Frankish king to adopt Christianity bore the name

of Chlodwig, a name from which the various forms Clovis, Louis, and Ludwig are derived. Chlodwig himself was, of course, a German; but the fact that in later times the Franks gave the new name of France to what was previously known as Gaul has led to some confusion. As yet there was no such country as "France."

Chlodwig managed to build up a very extensive kingdom. He subjugated his powerful Teutonic neighbours—the Alemanni of the Upper Rhine, and the Burgundians who lived still further south, and the Visigoths of Central Gaul, as well as the Latin rulers of North Gaul. And from this time, in spite of occasional mutations, the Franks were the dominant race in what we now call France.

Chlodwig is said to have embraced Christianity under the influence of his wife, and in consequence of a vow made just before the great battle of Tolbiac in 496 A.D. His followers seem to have been ready to take their religion from their king; and from this time the Franks were the champions of orthodox Catholicism, and in some degree of Papal ascendancy.

The descendants of Chlodwig did not inherit the abilities and energy of their founder. They are called the Merwing Kings; but they came to be nicknamed *fainéants* (do nothings), and the authority which they nominally wielded passed into the hands of their prime ministers, the Mayors of the Palace. We may mention here that among the Germans, the power of the kings was generally much limited by that of the leading warriors. The Lombard "dukes"¹ at one time did away with monarchical institutions, and ruled the Lombard parts of Italy themselves. Similarly under the Franks the Mayors of the Palace were often forced on the Merwing Kings by the will of

¹ The Italians called them "duces."

the nobles. German ideas naturally prevailed most in the eastern part of the Frank dominion, which was called Austrasia. In the western part, Neustria, the majority of the people were half-Latinized Kelts accustomed to Roman institutions.

Time went on. Burgundy and the northern possessions of the Franks were lost. Neustria and Austrasia were divided for a time. Ultimately an Austrasian Mayor of the Palace, named Pippin, succeeded in securing the practical kingship over both the East and the West Franks (A.D. 687), though he never attained to the title of king.

It sometimes happens that a single family produces a series of great men. Pippin's ancestors had secured by their ability a practical monopoly of the Austrasian Mayoralty. His descendants rose to far greater heights. Two of them in particular are conspicuous figures in the world's history. Both of these bore the name of Charles. One of them was the Charles Martel who turned back the Saracens. The other was Charles the Great, often called Charlemagne, the founder of the revived Roman Empire of the West.

Charles Martel was the son of the Pippin mentioned above. He succeeded in regaining some of the lost Frankish dominions. But of course his great achievement was that he saved Europe from the threatened Mohammedan domination. His victory at Tours in 732 A.D. must be regarded as the most important that had been won since Attila and his Tartar Huns were defeated near Chalons in 451. Twice within three centuries was Christendom saved from infidel invaders, who seemed to be sweeping everything before them; and on each occasion the decisive battle was fought in Gaul.

It was part of the policy of Charles, as indeed of most Frank rulers, to pose as a champion of the Church. The

popes in those days were again hard pressed by the Lombards. And now began the alliance between the Papacy and the Pippin family, which was destined to result in a revival of the Western Empire. The Pope (Gregory III.) appealed to Martel for assistance, and conferred on him the titles of Consul and Patrician. He did not formally transfer his secular allegiance from Constantinople to Gaul, but everything was tending (as we shall see) to an irrevocable breach between the Papacy and the Eastern Empire, and preparing the way for a revival of the Western.

Charles was succeeded by his son, named Pippin after his grandfather. This Pippin was the first of the family who secured the title of king; and his kingship meant something more than that of the Merwing sovereigns. It was not only that he possessed the actual as well as the nominal authority. The solemn sanction which the Pope gave to the deposition of Chilperic, the last of the Merwings, and to the coronation of Pippin, gave a more religious character to the Frankish monarchy than it had as yet possessed. The kings had always been elected by the nobles among the Franks as among the other German races. But now, besides being the chosen leader of the people's leaders, the king occupied a semi-ecclesiastical position as the Lord's anointed. (752.)

King Pippin was soon able to show his gratitude for Papal support in a very substantial way. In 753 the Lombards attacked Rome, and Pope Stephen fled to Gaul. Pippin at once took up his cause, and crossing the Alps extorted a favourable treaty from the Lombards. The treaty was broken, and Pippin returned. The upshot of his Italian campaigns was that the Exarchate, which the Lombards had by this time conquered, was handed over to the authority of the Pope, who

thus became the secular ruler of a considerable territory. From this time Lombard power rapidly declined; and what the Lombards lost went in the first instance to the Pope.

We will leave till a latter chapter the story of Pippin's great son, and turn back to trace the fortunes of yet another branch of the Germanic race.

The English, or Angles, were a tribe of Teutons whom we first hear of when they had settled in the region which is now called Sleswick, just south of modern Denmark. They talked a Low German dialect, and were thus more akin to the Goths than to any of the other Germanic races we have yet had to speak of; but the neighbourhood of the sea had profoundly modified their character and occupations. They farmed indeed much in the same way as the other German tribes. Each little village held its land in common, and managed, to a great extent, its own affairs. But besides being farmers, the English were also pirates. Their most energetic and adventurous warriors were attracted to seamanship rather than to agricultural pursuits. This, and the fact that they had settled in a more northerly and inhospitable clime, tended to make them an even fiercer and hardier race than most of the barbarians who were establishing themselves within the Empire. Their remote position also perhaps accounts for the fact that they retained their old pagan religion long after Goths, Vandals, Franks, and Burgundians had adopted Christianity.

Just north of the English lived the Jutes, a kindred race though with a greater Scandinavian admixture. South of the English came the Saxons, a much more numerous people, who spoke a very similar dialect, and had very similar institutions and characteristics. All three races made settlements in Britain during the fifth and sixth centuries. The settlers

soon began fighting with one another, and this fighting led to a sort of amalgamation of the three originally distinct races. Kingdoms were built up, many of which included Jutes, Angles, and Saxons among their subjects. The distinctions of descent were lost in the distinction of nationality; and in process of time the name "English" came to be applied to all the German settlers in Britain, and also to any descendants of the old Britons who were to be found among them. This may be accounted for by the fact that an Angle King attained to a sort of overlordship over all the German kingdoms in Britain in the very beginning of the seventh century. But it may also be noticed that the names Jute and Saxon were still required for races on the Continent; for it was only the Angles who crossed to Britain in a body, leaving their old homes completely deserted. Many Jutes remained in Jutland when others crossed to Britain. Many Saxons remained in Germany, and ultimately gave their name to a whole province. But the whole English race is said to have migrated. Its whole fortunes were embarked in the Western Island, the chief part of which is still called after them.

We will therefore from the first speak of the German settlers in Britain by the name of Englishmen, and extend it to all the Celtic and Scandinavian elements which these people so successfully amalgamated. The seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries were spent in almost incessant fighting. Wars of Teutons against Celts, of Teutons against Teutons, of Teutons and Celts against Scandinavians followed one another almost incessantly. Nevertheless, there were two important breaks, in which the English made great advances in the arts of peace, and laid the foundations of that literature for which we proudly claim the foremost place among modern literatures.

The first of these came towards the close of the seventh century, and is associated with the names of Cædmon and Bede. The second came near the close of the ninth century, and is associated with the still greater name of King Alfred. Of Bede we need not speak. He wrote chiefly in Latin, and his works might perhaps be paralleled by those of contemporary writers within the Empire. But the poetry of Cædmon and the prose of Alfred may perhaps be regarded as the first considerable literary works in the new languages which were displacing Roman and Greek. After Alfred's death (901) the fighting was renewed. All England was at length brought under a single king; and in spite of successive conquests by Danes and Normans, we must consider this as the first establishment of a kingdom which has practically lasted down to our own time.

HISTORIC SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XI

The *Franks* were a German race, who from the fifth century gradually conquered Northern Gaul, descending from the Lower Rhine.

Chlodwig (Ludwig, Clovis, Louis) accepted Christianity A.D. 495, and became champion of Catholics against Arians, and subdued South Gaul and much of German land. Under his successors (the Merwings or Merovingians), power passed to the Mayors of the Palace, and the Franks' dominions were split into two (Austrasia and Neustria).

The Austrasian Mayoralty fell into the hands of the *Pippin* family, who conquered the Neustrians A.D. 687. The third Pippin (son of Charles Martel) became King of the Franks in 752, founding the Karling or Carolingian dynasty.

The *English*, *Saxons*, and *Jutes* were Low German tribes with Scandinavian elements, who organized piratical excursions, chiefly against the coasts of Britain, and from c. 450 A.D. began to make permanent settlements there. A number of separate kingdoms were so established. One of these (Kent) was converted in A.D. 597. The English kingdom of the Northumbrians attained supremacy c. 600; and the name "English" came to be applied equally to Saxon and Jutish settlers in Britain, and to those Celtic Britons who survived.

XII.

THE EMPIRE 600 TO 800 A.D.

It will have been gathered from former chapters that the revived glory of the Empire under Justinian was short-lived. We have seen how Italy and Africa, the most important of Belisarius's conquests, were again lost to the Empire in the sixth and seventh centuries. The Lombards subdued the former, and the Saracens the latter; and in both cases the emperors gave little or no help to their subjects against the invaders. There was indeed a constant succession of dangers threatening Constantinople itself, which sufficed to occupy the energies of its rulers.

Long before Justinian's time barbarians had been periodically invading the East, no less than the West. The Goths at first threatened each Empire alternately; and while the Visigothic and Ostrogothic sections ultimately made their great settlements in Spain and Italy, the third Gothic nation, the people known as Gepidae (see page 24), remained north of the Danube, except when they crossed that river to harass the imperial dominions. The Eastern barbarians were, however, mostly Slavs or Tartars, at least from the time when the Lombards crossed the Alps. Before this the Lombards had joined with the Avars in destroying their own German kinsmen, the Gepidae; so that the dominions of Constantinople were pretty

free from Teutonic foes by the close of the sixth century. The barbarians on their northern frontiers, if more barbarous and quite as brave as the men who had overrun the West, were less capable, as their history seems to show, of making permanent conquests of lands that had been civilized. But they frequently crossed the Danube, plundering and destroying ; and they not infrequently threatened Constantinople itself.

We divide these barbarians into Slavonic tribes (who were probably Aryans) and Turanian tribes, amongst whom the Huns, the Bulgars, and the so-called Avars were the most important. The Bulgarians first become prominent in the reign of Justinian. Their invasion of Macedonia and Thrace in 559 A.D. was one of the most formidable and terrible in the history of Eastern Europe. The invaders seem to have come from Finland in comparatively recent times. How they got there, whether they were partly descended from Huns, or whether their ancestors had wandered thither direct from Asia, we have no means of judging ; but they were evidently akin to the Huns and other Tartar races. On this occasion they were defeated by Belisarius and driven back across the Danube ; but they long continued to be one of the most formidable neighbours of the Empire. The Avars, like the Bulgars, became prominent under Justinian. In ancient times there had been a great Avar Empire in Asia, and the race who were now to be added to the other scourges of Eastern Europe may have really represented the older Avars. But more recently they had been slaves of the Turks, who as yet were in Eastern Asia. A vast horde of these slaves had fled from their masters, and after wandering hundreds of miles came in contact with the Empire, and offered their alliance to Justinian. He readily enough engaged the new-comers to fight against his barbarous neigh-

bours. But the alliance was naturally of a temporary sort. The Avars became simply another of the barbarous gangs who alternately fought against one another, or formed alliances to ravage imperial territory. In A.D. 626 these Avars marched right up to the walls of Constantinople. But the capital proved, as so often before and since, too strong to be taken. The Avars had to retire, and were soon again fighting with other barbarians.

As for the Slavs, there is little to tell of them. They were probably the most numerous of the races of Eastern Europe, outside the Empire. But they could seldom hold their own against either Teutons or Tartars. They swelled the armies of Goths, Huns, Bulgars, and Avars; or lived as serfs under the rule of these; or fell back northwards, leaving the richer lands and better opportunities for plunder to successive bands of conquerors.

Turning next to the eastern and Asiatic frontiers of the Empire, we first notice that from the early part of the fourth century the growing Persian power had been considered the greatest of all the dangers threatening Roman civilization. The transfer of the capital to Constantinople seems to have been partly prompted by the wish to fix the imperial headquarters nearer to the Persian frontier; and though events had shown that the northerly barbarians were in reality more formidable than the Persians, there were frequent wars on the eastern side; and during the sixth century these wars on the whole resulted in Persian advances. But the taking of Palestine early in the seventh century roused eastern Christendom to what may almost be compared to the later crusades. The Emperor Heraclius headed the expedition (A.D. 623), and in the ensuing years gained a series of considerable victories. The

Persians then secured the formidable assistance of the Avars (see page 111), and co-operated with them in an attack on Constantinople. But the attack failed, and the Persians were so weakened by the long war that they fell an easy prey to the Saracens (page 97), who had, however, previously torn both Syria and Egypt from the Empire.

Each deliverance seemed to be followed by a fresh and more formidable danger. But we have seen (page 100) that Constantinople successfully resisted the Saracens, as it had previously resisted the attempts of Goths, Avars, and Persians. Whatever its other merits or demerits as a capital, it had at least the advantage of an almost impregnable position. From its foundation in 324 to its fall in 1453 it was constantly being attacked; but it was only once, for however short a time, occupied by the enemies of the Empire.

We may notice here that though the Empire had now been pushed into a corner of Europe, it was still by far the most civilized and wealthy of the European nations. Its dominions had been reduced to pretty much the same territory as is now ruled over by the Turks.¹ But the character and resources of that territory bore a very different relation to those of the rest of Europe from what they do at the present day. While the brutal rule of the Turk has been reducing what was once the garden of Europe into a miserable wilderness, the other parts of our Continent have been turned from confused and disorderly fields of battle and plunder into the civilized nations of modern Europe. But in the centuries we are speaking of these processes had not begun. It was in the dominions ruled over from Constantinople that the

¹ The Empire, however, included Greece and the southern part of Italy.

chief remains of the old Roman civilization were discoverable. The Latin language had indeed been disused. A Greek dialect was the official tongue. But Roman law and Roman systems of administration survived, as well as the despotic monarchy which the Empire had established. In Western Europe the power of the kings was limited by that of chieftains. These might be organized, as in England, into Witenagemotes, or they might stand apart like the Counts and Dukes of Frankland; but in either case they formed an effective check on the royal authority. They elected and deposed sovereigns, and claimed to be consulted on the policy to be pursued.

In ecclesiastical matters there was a similar contrast, even before the schism of the Church of which we shall presently speak. The power of the popes did indeed somewhat decline after Gregory's death, and it was not till the eleventh century that it attained the tremendous dimensions which we associate with the mediæval papacy. But it was already a reality, which secular rulers could not ignore, though the vagueness of its character made it hard to deal with. In every Western nation the Church was becoming a more or less independent body, whose leaders owned an allegiance, and could look for sympathy and support, outside their own State. But in the East there was no shadow of ecclesiastical independence. The patriarch of Constantinople was subservient to the Empire, and when we come to speak of the controversy about images, we shall see that the Eastern Church was ready to take its views from a successful barbarian soldier, who had been raised to the throne by military success.

The vast wealth of the emperors was at once a symptom and a fresh source of imperial power. The accounts that have

come to us of the luxury and ostentation of the oriental palaces read more like pages from the *Arabian Nights* than like sober realities. And the outward forms of servility with which an emperor had to be approached helped to bring home to the imagination of his subjects the duty of passive obedience which the Church taught, and the law enforced. The grandeur of the palace was reflected by the capital; and at a time when London and Paris were collections of mud hovels, Constantinople was a city of splendid churches and other magnificent buildings.

We must now briefly notice the iconoclastic controversy which led to a definite schism between the Eastern and Western Churches. From 717 to 741 the imperial throne was occupied by Leo III., a man who had begun life as an Isaurian peasant, and had then greatly distinguished himself as a soldier. In fact the salvation of the Eastern Empire from the Saracens seems to have been largely due to his efforts. In A.D. 717 the army secured his election as Emperor, and nine years later he began his attack on the worship of images, which then prevailed throughout Christendom. Leo seems to have been a sort of eighth century Puritan. In the remote districts where he spent his youth religious services were probably of a simple character, and we can well understand how the elaborate ritual and worship in Constantinople may have appeared to him idolatrous in tendency. The fact, however, that he allowed so long a time to elapse before adopting his iconoclastic policy seems rather to point to a later conviction. His wars had brought him into contact with Mohammedans, and he may have been attracted by the stern monotheism of Islam. He may even have attributed the successes of the Saracens to their exclusive homage to Allah. The reverence which Chris-

tians paid to the mother of Christ, and to the other saints, certainly came dangerously near to that which Christianity itself asserted to be due only to God. At any rate Leo issued a decree forbidding altogether the worship of images; and he followed it up, a few years later, by an edict commanding all images in the churches to be destroyed, and the walls to be whitewashed. So great was the Emperor's power, and so servile was the Eastern Church, that not only was this order widely obeyed, but a council of bishops at Constantinople (A.D. 754) condemned all visible symbols of Christ except in the Eucharist. Leo was by this time dead, but his son and successor, Constantine v., was vigorously pushing forward the same iconoclastic policy. In the interval between Leo's edict and this council of Constantinople a fierce controversy had raged throughout the Eastern Church. The common people were mostly attached to the symbols which the Emperors were assailing. The destruction of statues and pictures deeply wounded their feelings, and most of the monks, with many of the inferior clergy, were animated by the same sentiment. A cruel persecution had consequently been commenced, in which the monks seem to have been the chief sufferers. But for once the emperors found that there were limits even to their power. Yet it was not till A.D. 842 that images were finally declared to be legal in the Eastern Church.

Meanwhile the Church of Rome and of the West had broken off all communion with that of the East.

Almost simultaneously with the issuing of Leo's second Edict a council was held in Rome, which solemnly justified the use of images, and excommunicated the iconoclasts. The immediate result of this defiance was a fresh attempt at the conquest of Italy. But this only ended in a disastrous failure,

which left the Exarchy more than ever powerless, except in the immediate neighbourhood of Ravenna and Naples. The shadowy claim of the Emperor to acknowledgment in the West became more shadowy than ever, now that Western Christendom had deliberately excommunicated those who accepted the imperial policy. The communion of the churches was indeed temporarily restored when the East purged itself of iconoclasm. We are not concerned here with the doctrinal difference about the procession of the Holy Ghost, which ultimately led to the complete severance. From the point of view of secular history we must regard the quarrel about images as the occasion of the breaking of the thin thread which still kept together the two great branches of Christendom. Till then the Constantinople ruler had been in some sense recognized as "the Emperor" even in those parts of the West where he exercised no sort of authority. Now the West was about to have an emperor of its own; and there was no doubt who must be the man to hold this high position, if dignity was to be conjoined with power; for we shall see in the next chapter how completely, by the close of the eighth century, the King of the Franks was overshadowing all other Western potentates.

HISTORIC SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XII.

After the destruction of the Gepidae and the migration of the Lombards (568) the Eastern Empire had few Teuton neighbours, but it continued to be molested by Slavs and Turanians, especially Bulgarians and Avars. There were also frequent wars with Persia, especially from 603 to 626, when Constantinople was with difficulty saved from double attack of Persians and Avars.

Constantinople remained the wealthiest and most civilized city in Europe; but the despotism in Church and State repressed

originality and individuality, though there remained much intellectual activity.

Leo, the Isaurian, became Emperor in 717, and began his attack on Image Worship in 726. The popes supported those who resisted this policy, and broke off communion with the Eastern Church. There was afterwards temporary reconciliation; but a definite schism was practically made when the pope set up a fresh Emperor of Rome (A.D. 800).

XIII.

CHARLES THE GREAT.

WE come now to the great German, through whom the Western Empire was revived, in the form of that Holy Roman Empire which continued to exist down to the nineteenth century. Till recently it was usual to speak of him as Charlemagne; but the use of this French title has to some extent confused many readers as to his nationality and his place in European history. We must always remember that there was as yet no such country as France, and that Gaul was never to Charles anything more than a province in his vast dominions. He was a German, of one of the purest German races, leading German warriors, and, in some sense, laying the foundations of modern Germany. We are loth to abandon a name surrounded by so many historic and legendary associations; yet on the whole it seems best to follow the modern fashion, and speak of him simply as Charles.

Charles was undoubtedly one of the greatest kings in history. As a warrior, he was a worthy descendant of Charles Martel and the great Pippins. He was constantly distinguishing himself against heathen Saxons and Moslem Saracens; against Lombards, Frisians, Bavarians, Avars, Slavs, and Danes. But his success as a warrior impresses us less than his insight as a statesman and his skill as an administrator. To maintain and reform laws and institutions; to hold in check the disorderly

racers who acknowledged his authority ; to develop and restrain the ecclesiastical activities ; to secure the co-operation of warlike chiefs in the work of government, without allowing them to break away into independence ; these were harder tasks than the mere winning of battles, or the conquering of fresh provinces. And it is chiefly for his success in these that he deserves the title "The Great."

Charles was twenty-six years of age when his father Pippin died (768). The Franks, like most Germans, elected their own kings, and generally gave a preference to the natural heirs. So on this occasion Charles was elected king, but only over part of his father's dominions. The rest went to his brother ; but this brother died a couple of years later, and his sons were passed over in favour of their uncle. Charles thus became king of all the Franks, and entered almost at once on his conquering career. In his father's time there had been pretty constant fighting between Franks and Saxons in the valley of the Rhine. Charles now determined to conquer these dangerous neighbours, and to give his invasion a missionary character according to the commonest missionary fashion of those days. In other words, the Saxons were to be made not only to submit to the Frank king, but also to renounce their heathen worship. The task proved a hard one. It was comparatively easy to defeat the Saxons and destroy their idols ; but as soon as Charles retired, the conquered people rose in arms. They clung with desperate fidelity to their religion and independence. The struggle lasted for thirty years. After one victory, 4500 prisoners were massacred ; but as a rule the alternative of "Baptism or Death" was offered. Strong castles and churches were erected ; missionaries from England and elsewhere were imported. But again and again the pagans

rallied, and often carried fire and sword across the borders into Frankish lands. Charles had, as we shall see, too many other things on his hands to be able to give all his time and energy to the Saxon wars; but at length the work was done, and the Saxons became the great bulwark of Christendom against the heathen Slavs on their eastern borders.

Charles' Italian wars next demand attention. The popes were still hard pressed by the Lombards; and Charles was true to the family policy of the Pippins. So in spite of the pressure of his Saxon wars he arranged a double invasion of Italy. According to his custom he had first secured the adhesion of his leading chieftains. It is probable indeed that these would not have obeyed orders unless they had been first consulted. At any rate, whether from policy or necessity, Charles laid his plans before an assembly at Geneva. There seems to have been some opposition. But ultimately one army marched by Mount St. Bernard, while another, under Charles, took the Mount Cenis route. (773.)

The Lombards made a brave resistance, but they were driven back to Pavia, and while this last stronghold was being besieged Charles set off to visit the Pope. He entered Rome on foot, and repaid the enthusiastic welcome he received with every sign of devotion and humility. The alliance between the great king and the head of the Western Church was no doubt much cemented by this visit. Charles was quite the sort of man to be impressed by what was to be seen at Rome, the remains of a great civilization, the symbols of an empire not resting on military force. And the Pope was probably not less impressed by the personality of the Frank. The immediate outcome of the visit was an agreement that Charles might add to his own dominions all that

he conquered from the Lombards, except only the dominion Pippin had conferred on the popes, and some additional lands which Charles added thereto. Pavia soon afterwards surrendered, and the Lombards acknowledged Charles as their king. (774.)

His next important wars were against the Spanish Moors, amongst whom a civil dissension was raging. The Governor of Saragossa invited the Franks to come to his assistance, promising to surrender his dominions to Charles. The offer was tempting to a king who combined in so marked a degree secular ambition with the desire to act as the champion of the Church. It involved, however, a march through Aquitaine, whose Duke was in some sort a vassal of the Frank, but apparently a practically independent ruler. All went well on the advance to Saragossa; but the invasion of these Christian infidels led the Moors to suspend their internal disputes. Saragossa was so vigorously defended, and the Saracen armies proved so formidable, that Charles was glad to accept a bribe to abandon the siege, and to return to his own country. (778.) On the backward march a portion of his army was cut to pieces by Basques, instigated it is said by the Duke of Aquitaine. Among those who fell was the hero of the famous "Song of Roland."

One immediate consequence of this incident was the conquest of Aquitaine, and its annexation to the Frankish dominion. Like Lombardy, however, it continued to be regarded as to some extent distinct, and was even given a baby son of Charles as nominally its king. (781.) Another baby was at the same time crowned "King of Italy."

After this Charles' conquests were chiefly in central Europe. He extended his authority far along the Danube, and round

to the Adriatic. He subdued the Bavarians, and drove back Huns and Slavs in a series of campaigns; and, so far as dominion went, the title of Emperor was only a recognition of existing facts.

A few words must, however, be introduced as to the special form of imperial dignity to which Charles attained. In the winter of 800, when he was on another visit to Rome, the Pope suddenly and unexpectedly (if we may believe the contemporary account) placed a crown on his head, and prostrated himself before him as Emperor of the Romans, and his own secular over-lord. The act was at once a signal mark of gratitude and respect; and also a complete repudiation of the claims of the Constantinople Emperors, who still regarded themselves as Emperors of Rome. We can scarcely doubt that Charles had been consulted before such a dignity was conferred upon him. It did not add anything to his dominion. It was not followed by any acknowledgment of even a nominal supremacy over nations outside the Papal and the Frankish dominions. The Moors of Spain could not be expected to make such an acknowledgment. But even the Christian kings in England do not seem to have been asked to recognize the Western Emperor; and the barbarians of North and Central Europe were only subject to Charles so far as he could conquer them. Nevertheless the Western Empire, now established, was to be in time something more than a name. When the Frankish dominions broke up into separate States they all professed some allegiance to the Emperor, and it was no doubt hoped that he would become a secular centre of unity for Western Europe, corresponding to the spiritual centre—the Pope.

Turning next to Charles' work as a statesman and as

administrator, we are met with the difficulty, or rather the impossibility, of deciding, how much of the system which he tried to enforce was of his creation. We have very inadequate information as to the institutions that existed before his time among the subjects of the Frank kings. The disorderly chaos produced by successive wars and conquests, and by the imperfect amalgamation of Roman laws and Teutonic customs, is scarcely conceivable by a modern reader. Something, however, had undoubtedly been done; and the first place in the work of establishing order must be given to the Church. Here alone there was a definite organization. Here alone there was an evidence that force was not the only ruler. Bishops, by their learning and character, and by the respect in which they were held, became the natural counsellors of every barbarian chief who desired to be something more than a mere barbarian, and who wished to give prosperity and peace to his subjects. Bishops, again, often acted as ambassadors and mediators between rival warriors, or as representatives of the people whose civil rulers had fled before conquerors. By their position at the head of the ecclesiastical organization they could also be the most effective mouthpieces of the conquerors. In an age without printing, and in places where confusion reigned, there was no such effective way of giving publicity to an edict, as by bishops undertaking that their clergy should make it known to their flocks. There were few public meetings in those days, except for religious purposes.

Superstition contributed to the effects of learning, character, and organization. So we are not surprised to find bishops playing a very important part in the midst of barbarian conquests and wars. And their influence was generally beneficial.

On themselves, and on the Church as a spiritual body, the result may have been demoralizing. The great position of the bishops, and to a less extent of the clergy, tempted ambitious and unscrupulous men to become priests and monks. These naturally misused their influence. Intrigues, corruption, and secularity flourished among those who professed specially to represent Christianity. Nevertheless the power of the clergy was on the whole an advantage; and Charles did his best to strengthen, as well as to reform the Church. Three hundred and five of the articles of his Capitularies (see page 127) deal with canonical matters. He built cathedrals and monasteries and schools for the training of the clergy. He forced baptism on the conquered heathen; and he secured to the bishops a very prominent place in the assemblies of which we shall presently speak.

The second great organizing and civilizing force at work in the chaos which preceded the accession of Charles was Roman law and Roman institutions. The greatness of these is illustrated by the fact that they survived the ruin wrought by the successive barbarian deluges. The Germans naturally brought their own laws and customs with them; but these were mostly of a simple sort, only suited to primitive modes of life. As the conquerors settled down to enjoy the fruits of conquests, as they began to build and plant, to buy and sell, to wish to leave their riches to others, they gradually adopted systems that had existed among their more or less Romanized subjects; and their own old customary laws were gradually adapted by lawyers to the more elaborated principles of Roman jurisprudence. Closely connected with this was the gradual adoption by the conquerors of the languages of the conquered. These must have been in most places by far the most numerous

section of the population; and the desire to make commands understood would encourage attempts to pick up some knowledge of their language. But besides this, the various Latin dialects of the Empire were paths by which the conquerors might acquire some knowledge of law, of literature, and of the meaning of the Church services. Marriages between the two races helped on the process. Otherwise the two languages would probably have gone on existing side by side. But as the distinction of race broke down by intermarriages, it was natural that the language of the majority, of civilization, and of the Church should triumph over the other. Some words of the conqueror's tongue got admission into the common language; and this would happen with different words in different places. Gradually the four great Romance languages were formed (Italian, Spanish, French, and Provençal), but all alike had Latin for their basis.

Even so great a ruler as Charles could do little to influence the language of his subjects. His great efforts to encourage education throughout his dominions must, however, have done something to hasten the process of which we have been speaking; while his extraordinary legislative activity must have done much to modify old Germanic customs, and to introduce the principles of Roman law. This brings us to the subject of the famous assemblies which Charles used to hold twice every year in order to consult the leading men of Church and State, and to secure their co-operation in his policy. Assemblies for discussion had been an established institution among the German tribes long before any of them invaded the Empire. In fact, each tribe was formerly self-governed. All its freemen met to elect their rulers, to allot their land, and to settle other matters. In time of war, and when tribes

amalgamated for military purposes, assemblies of leaders would to a great extent supersede assemblies of all men. Universal suffrage is not an institution suitable to an army in the midst of a campaign. In crises much must ever be left to the commander-in-chief; but the habits of self-government learnt in their forest homes would not easily be set aside. A commander must needs have quite exceptional gifts if he could dispense with the advice of the other leaders, or overrule their wishes and desires. But after great conquests had been made geographical facts would tend to destroy all forms of self-government, at least if any considerable region acknowledged a single ruler. General assemblies might still be possible for small areas to consider local matters, but they would evidently be out of the question for a whole State such as the Franks established. Even the more military system of meetings of chiefs would become difficult when the chiefs were no longer engaged on a common campaign, but were many of them scattered over a vast territory. A foolish king might rejoice to be thus freed from interference. But Charles evidently strongly desired to make national assemblies of all the prominent persons of the realm, a fundamental element in his system of government. It must, however, be understood that these assemblies bore little resemblance to what we call a Parliament. The initiative and the final decision was with the king. They were not absolutely precluded from opening questions themselves, but, as a rule, the order of business was for the king to submit to them the *capitula*, or laws which he had drawn up, with whatsoever assistance he had chosen to get. Then followed the discussion for "two or three days or more, according to the importance of the business." The king was not present at these deliberations except when the magnates

expressed a desire that he would join them. Then he "remained with them as long as they wished, and they reported to him with perfect familiarity what they thought about all matters, and what were the friendly discussions that had arisen among them." Ultimately the king made his final resolution "with the wisdom he had received from God." The assembly was only consultative; but the same spirit that made Charles eager to get their opinions, no doubt led him also to give great weight to them.

But the assemblies were not merely convoked to advise on legislative proposals. The members were expected to report to the king "touching the part of the kingdom each had come from. Not only was this permitted to all, but they were strictly enjoined to make enquiries during the interval between the assemblies . . . and they were bound to seek knowledge from foreigners as well as natives, enemies as well as friends, some by employing emissaries, and without troubling themselves much about the manner in which they acquired their information. The king wished to know whether in any part, in any corner of the kingdom, the people were restless, and what was the cause of their restlessness . . . whether any of those that had revolted seemed disposed towards submission, and whether those that were still independent were threatening the kingdom with any attack. On all these subjects, whenever there was any manifestation of disorder or danger, he demanded chiefly what were the motives or occasions of them."¹

The assemblies included both clerical and lay dignitaries, who sat together or separately according to whether the business was ecclesiastical, secular, or mixed. Of course it

¹ The quotations are from Masson's translation of a celebrated letter from Hincmar, who was archbishop of Rheims in the ninth century.

was only leaders of each order who sat in these assemblies. The commons and the inferior clergy were quite unrepresented; and there was probably no clearly-defined principle of selection in the summons. For the ranks of the nobility, and the conditions under which men held estates, and exercised jurisdiction, were still very chaotic. As early as the days of Chlodwig we read of "Counts," and the higher title of "Dukes" was almost from the first applied by the Latins to leaders of barbarians. Charles seems to have aimed at putting every district of the Empire under the rule of some Count, Duke, or other governor, who should be responsible, under the Emperor himself, for the maintenance of order, the administration of justice, the collecting of taxes, and the military organization within his district. These governors were at first nominated by the king, but their authority tended to become hereditary, especially as it was connected with the holding of land. Thus a regular hereditary nobility grew up, whose semi-royal authority was a fertile source of confusion and civil war in later times. Under Charles, the alternative was to entrust large powers to such deputies, or that various parts of the Empire should be practically without government.

The system of land tenure was a mass of confusions. We are told that when Burgundians and Goths conquered part of Gaul they took for themselves two-thirds of the conquered lands. In addition to this they seem to have quartered themselves as "guests" on the former proprietors. Then came the Frankish conquerors, and it is not clear what principles (if any) they went on in this matter. Some of the land was certainly left to old Romanized proprietors; other portions became estates of the conquerors, and were cultivated by the

conquered as dependents, if not serfs. These estates were called *alodial*. Some of them could pass to females; others were held under what was called *Salic* law. Much land was naturally reserved for the king, and was called *fiscal*; *i.e.*, connected with the treasury. Out of this again kings would carve estates for their friends and favourites. These were called *benefices* and for them (unlike the *alodial* estates) the holders were expected to render services to the king. Benefices (like countships) were probably not originally transmitted from father to son. Proprietary rights were in fact mixed up with official duties and jurisdictions; so that it was difficult to say of many men whether they were landlords or agents of the king. And meanwhile the alodial proprietors, too weak to protect themselves from wandering brigands or rapacious counts, were attaching themselves to powerful neighbours on conditions that made the tenure resemble that of the beneficiaries. Dukes and Counts again imitated the kings in giving slices of land as rewards or marks of favour, subject, however, to the rendering of services. In short, what we know as the feudal system; *i.e.*, the system under which land was held in return for services (military or agricultural), was rapidly growing up. In the south, however, of what we now call France, the alodial system of free proprietors long remained in existence side by side with the feudal system.

Charles evidently realized the dangers which were latent in the local independent jurisdictions of dukes, counts, and beneficiaries. He tried to cope with them by a system of travelling agents, the *missi dominici*, whom we may describe as commissioners or inspectors. These visited every district of the Empire, with large powers of enquiry, and some rights

of interference. It was their business to provide the Emperor with independent reports, to carry his orders through the land, and to see that they were enforced. Thus the local authorities were kept in some sort of subordination to the central government, so long as the king was a man of energy, wise in the choice of agents, and resolute in supporting them. But in after times the central authority almost disappeared, and the great feudatories became, to all intents and purposes, independent rulers.

We have already mentioned Charles' efforts to reform the Church and to encourage learning. But we must now speak in more detail of these departments of his activity. At the time of his accession the clergy had become greatly demoralized by corruption and worldliness. Bishops were scarcely distinguishable from counts. They were fighters, rulers, and politicians. Their morality was generally lax; and they had allowed the schools founded by the predecessors, to be closed, or at least to languish. Charles tried to effect a sweeping reform. He caused enquiries to be made into the character and learning of the clergy; and those who did not come up to the Emperor's minimum standard were ruthlessly ejected. Bishops were forbidden to fight; and when the Pope's assistance seemed desirable it was asked for in ways scarcely distinguishable from commands. For while Charles professed to recognize the Pope as the head of the Church, he carried the principle of royal supremacy as far as any of his predecessors or successors, only that he used his supremacy to reform rather than to rob the Church.

But perhaps it was his zeal for learning that chiefly distinguished Charles from the ordinary race of conquerors and rulers. He encouraged scholars from all parts of Europe to

come to his court, and so gathered round him a group that included almost every living thinker and writer. Alcuin came from England (where he had founded a great school at York), and spent almost all the last twenty years of his life in Charles' service. Eginhard was educated in the Emperor's own school, and became his secretary and enthusiastic biographer. Theodulph was a Goth, who came from Italy, and became one of Charles' most energetic *missi*, and a voluminous writer in prose and verse. Many others, now almost forgotten, co-operated with the Emperor, and made his reign a brief period of intellectual light and energy between the dark ages that preceded and followed it. Schools were established in most of the dioceses and many of the monasteries; and especially a sort of travelling university that accompanied the king from residence to residence, and that not only provided classes in all the sciences of the age, but also kept up a high standard of intellectual conversation in the palace. Charles himself learnt both Latin and Greek; but he loved his native German best, and sought to fix its grammar and vocabulary, to prevent its degenerating into a mere collection of dialects. But the act of *writing* proved too difficult for the great king. He tried to master it late in life; but the hand accustomed to other tools could not adapt itself to the pen. Charles died at length (814 A.D.) in the forty-sixth year of his reign and the seventy-first of his life. He preserved, almost to the last, his vigour of body and mind, hunting energetically within a few months of his death. He also maintained to the very last the vast dominion he had built up. But no weaker hand than his would have been equal to the task. The nations he had ruled over were divided at his death among his three sons; and though they were afterwards reunited, the union was but brief.

The extraordinary thing is, that such a variety of races, scattered over such a vast region, full of barbarous courage and self-will, should have been kept together at all.

HISTORIC SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XIII.

Charles the Great (Charlemagne), son of Pippin, became King of Franks in 768 A.D., and sole king in 771, and in the course of a reign of forty-five years extended his dominion over Saxony, North Spain, North Italy, and much of Central Europe. He was crowned "Emperor of the Romans" by the Pope in 800 A.D. Though incessantly engaged in war he greatly encouraged education and literature, reformed the Church, and distinguished himself as an administrator and legislator. But it is hard to say how much of his legislation was strictly original, and how much was merely the continued development of Teutonic institutions under influence of old Roman law and Celtic custom, and the gradual change of circumstances.

XIV.

EUROPE IN THE NINTH CENTURY.

HUNGARIANS, Russians, and Scandinavians begin to play an important part in European history during the ninth century. The Hungarians were Magyars, a branch of the great Turkish race, of which another branch was ultimately to destroy the Eastern Empire. Hungarians seem to have co-operated with Huns in the days of Attila, but it is uncertain what connection there was between the two races. At the beginning of the ninth century the Hungarians were living near the Volga, but before its close they had conquered the region which has since borne their name. To the half-civilized Europeans, through whose territories they marched, these Hungarians seemed very barbarous; but they appear to have had a sort of civilization of their own, borrowed from Persia by their ancestors. They were a purely Asiatic race, with habits something like those of the Turcomans. Their religion was *Shamanism*, with some *Parsee* accretions; but they tolerated any religion which their subjects chose to follow, and were generally lenient towards the submissive. But having established themselves in Hungary about 895 A.D., they became the terror of Western Europe. In 899 they invaded Italy, and extorted a heavy tribute. Then they turned towards Germany, and organized a succession of marauding expeditions, some of which extended across the Rhine into modern France. They were believed to be cannibals,

and many litanies had a special petition for protection from the Hungarians. They were converted to Christianity in the course of the tenth century.

The *Russians* were a Slavonic race whom we first hear of in the ninth century. The majority of the people in what we now call Russia were probably Slavs during all the period spoken of in this book. But of all the great branches of the Aryan race the Slavs were the slowest to develop any sort of civilization. They remained wandering and barbarous tribes, which were frequently subjugated by the more warlike and energetic Germans or Tartars. In the ninth century, however, they began to build up kingdoms like Poland and Bohemia in Central Europe; while in the East the Russians came into prominence under the leadership of a Scandinavian named Ruric. We shall see that the most striking fact about the ninth century is the energy and enterprise of the Scandinavians. As the "Danes" settled in England, and another set of Northmen built up what became Normandy, so we must assume that some bands of Scandinavian pirates effected a settlement on the eastern coast of the Baltic, and thence extended their dominion inland. Presently Scandinavian Ruric rules over all the North Russian tribes (862 A.D.). Then he proceeds to conquer the South or "Little" Russians, a somewhat different race, and so comes into contact with the Eastern Empire. The relations of the Russians with Constantinople were at first of a peaceful sort. Merchants carried slaves, furs, and hides to the capital of the East, and brought back corn, wine, and oil. Presumably they also brought back accounts of the immense wealth and astonishing luxury of Constantinople. At any rate, the cupidity of the Slav barbarians was excited, and naval attacks began to be made on the great city. The

first of these was in 865 A.D. Two others followed in the next century, and from this time there seems to have been a tradition among the Russians that they would one day take Constantinople. The early attacks, however, were easily repelled.

The conversion of the Russians to Christianity is said to have begun as early as 864 A.D. ; but it made little progress till 988, when their king, Vladimir, went to Constantinople to be baptized, and on his return instituted a rigorous persecution of paganism. Under this pressure the Russians nominally accepted the religion of the Greek Church.

We must next speak briefly of the great Scandinavian expansion. The Scandinavian races are near akin to the German, and especially to those Low German races from which we English are chiefly descended. They no doubt came from the same stock ; but, pushing further north, they conquered Fin and Lap tribes, and gradually built up the three kingdoms of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. The people they thus conquered belonged to the Turanian family ; and it is probable that intermarriages introduced a Tartar element into the Scandinavian peoples. The characteristics of the race must have been further modified by the nature and climate of the lands where they settled. They had to fight for bare existence—with a barren soil and a long winter, hewing their way through forests, or extracting a scanty subsistence from the steep slopes of fiords. In such struggles they acquired an indomitable energy and courage, which they afterwards turned against their fellow-men. When they took to seamanship and piracy, it was at first only to bridge over the intervals between their harvests. But the taste for these new employments grew with practice and success, and soon there was scarcely a coast of Europe which they had not visited. One stream, starting from

Norway, made its way to the Shetlands, and thence branched off to Iceland, the Isle of Man, and the east coast of Ireland. Another stream, starting from Denmark, harassed the coasts of England and the Frankish dominions. Wherever they landed fire and destruction announced their arrival. Monasteries and churches specially attracted them, partly for the wealth accumulated there, partly (if we may believe the contemporary accounts) because they were animated by a definite hatred of Christianity, partly because priests and monks were less likely to make a successful defence. From mere pirate raids they advanced to definite conquests and settlements. England in particular was completely overrun; and the heroic resistance organized by Alfred only saved the south and west from Danish rule. It was reserved for Alfred's son and grandson to conquer England for the English. Gaul meanwhile was subjected to similar attacks. Again and again pirates sailed up the Seine and threatened Paris. At length a powerful band were allowed (A.D. 913) to settle in the north of Gaul, where they built up the great Duchy of Normandy. The Northmen in Gaul, like the Danes in England, adopted Christianity. But they were not, like the Danes, re-conquered. On the contrary, they developed into the foremost race in Christendom.

We must now turn from the new-comers to the two empires. The ninth century saw a considerable literary revival at Constantinople. An immense number of books were written; but they were mostly abridgments, translations, or annotated editions of entire works. They showed plenty of learning and industry; but all capacity for original thought or freshness of imagination had been crushed out by the despotism in Church and State. Stagnation had settled down on the Eastern Empire; and the attempts made by many of the emperors to

encourage literature and art produced nothing of lasting value for humanity. Yet we cannot help feeling some admiration for a system and organization which kept the ancient civilization in some degree alive for century after century, and held at bay attacks from all sides. The persistency of the East contrasts not altogether unfavourably with the constant mutations in the West, to which our attention must now be turned.

At the death of Charles the Great, his dominions were divided up among his sons. Then these soon began a series of wars in which the boundaries, and the very number of the nations, kept changing. The Empire passes from German to Italian hands. The Emperor is sometimes a petty potentate, ruling over only the north of Italy, and not even recognized beyond the Alps. Sometimes the vast dominions of Charles the Great were reunited for a short time. Then they again separated, with a general tendency to fall into *five* separate states.

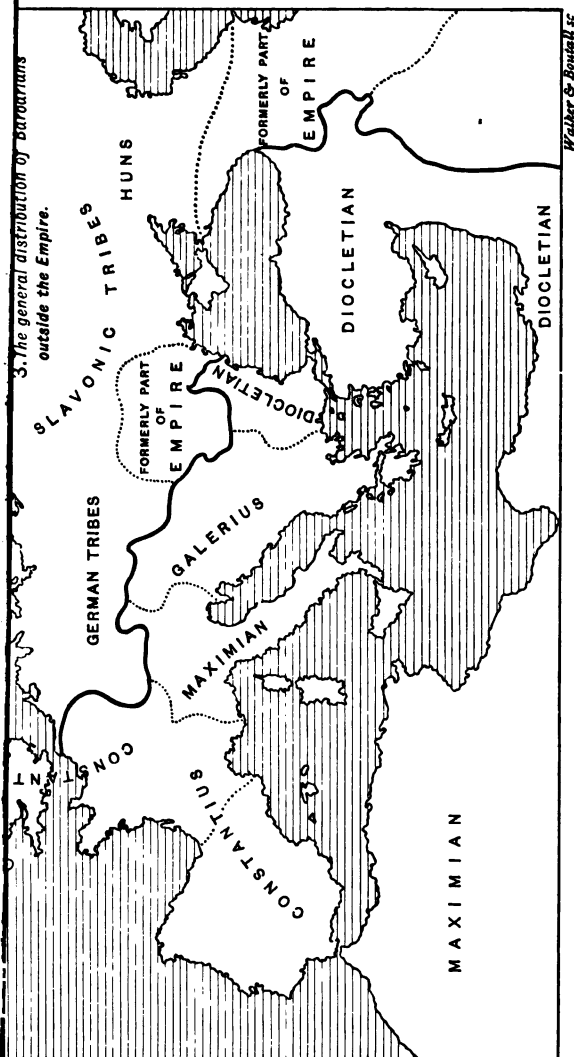
Let us begin with the most westerly of these, which was ultimately to grow into modern France. The descendants of Charlemagne retained a nominal supremacy here till 987 A.D. But here, more than elsewhere, the sovereign's chief vassals secured a practical independence. The Counts of Paris and Orleans were generally the most influential persons in the land of the West Franks. At length, in 987, Hugh Capet, Count of Paris, got himself elected king, and founded a dynasty which in its turn found itself thwarted and set at defiance by powerful subjects.

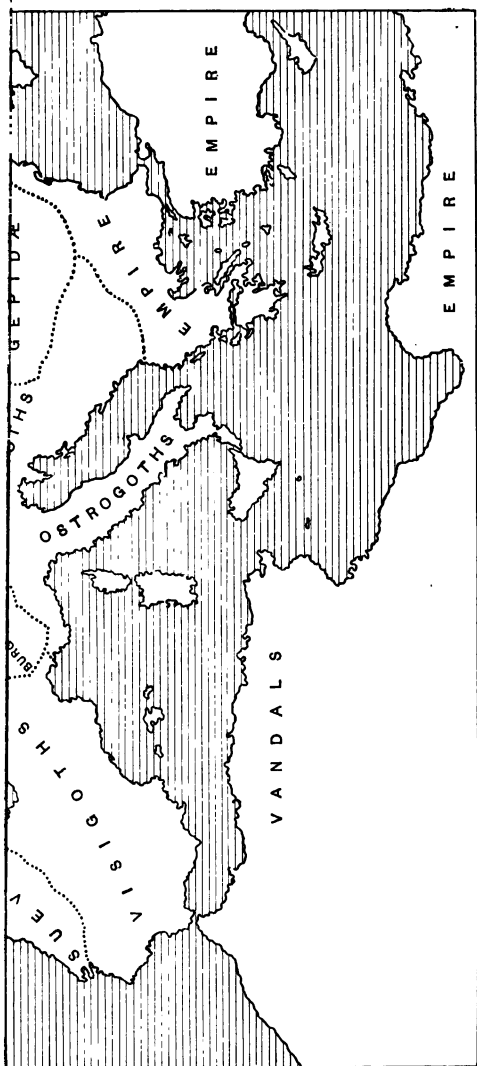
In the south-east of Gaul was the Burgundian dominion, which was alternately an independent State, a part of the East Frank or German kingdom, and a feudatory of France. Further north was the strip known as Lotharingia, then, as

now, often a subject of contention between France and Germany; but sometimes belonging to the Emperor, and neither to the West Frank nor to the East Frank kings. The latter were generally occupied with wars against the various Slavonic and Turanian races, who were now building up the new kingdoms of Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary on their eastern borders. The East Franks and Germans gradually split up into different States, of which the Austrian and Saxon were the chief. Austria was the great bulwark of the West against the Hungarians. Saxony became, for a time, the most powerful of the German States. Its King Otto was elected Emperor in 962. For nearly a century before this the Emperors had been Italian, and had ruled over the fifth of the main divisions of the Western Empire.

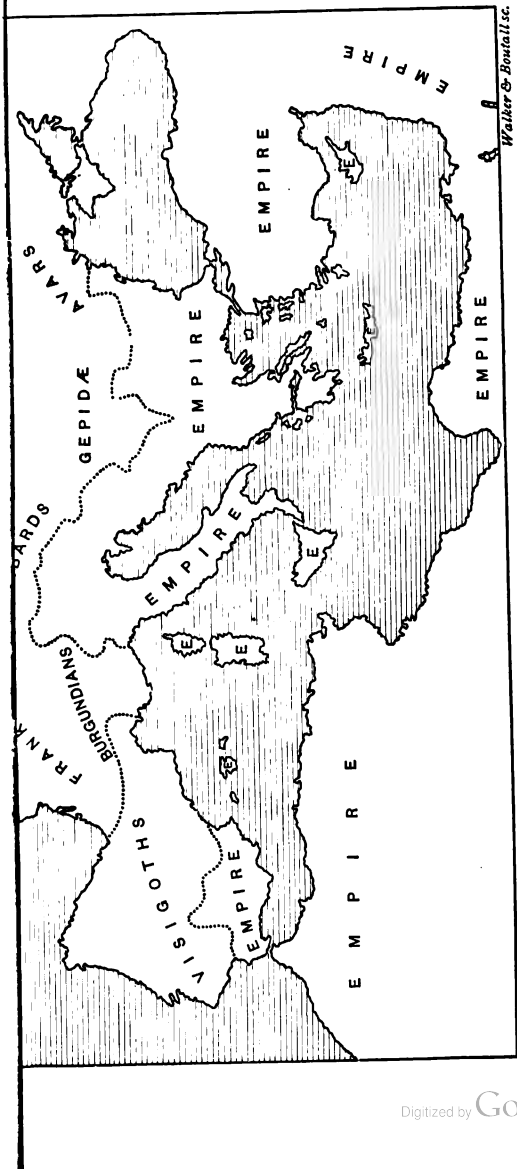
On the whole the ninth century was a period of confusion; but the germs of a new Order were slowly growing. The chief races that make up modern Europe were shaking down into the sort of positions they have still held. Christianity, Catholicism, and Feudalism were coming to be established throughout central and Western Europe, except that the Moors still ruled in Spain. "Modern" history, as distinguished from "Ancient," had plainly begun.



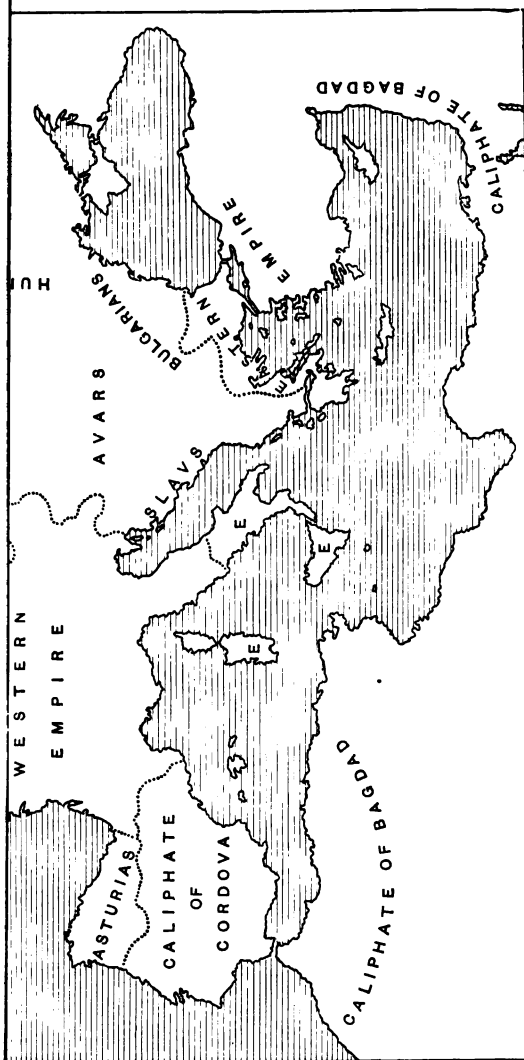




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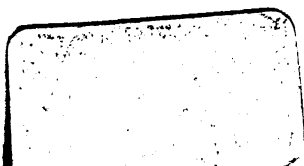
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